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CALAVAR;

OR,

THE KNIGHT OF THE CONQUEST:

A

ROMANCE OF MEXICO.

Read, Robert M.
1 —

Escucha, pues, un rato, y diré cosas
Estrañas y espantosas, poco á poco.

Garcilaso de la Vega.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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INTRODUCTION.

NATURE, and the memory of strange deeds of renown, have flung over the valley of Mexico a charm more romantic than is attached to many of the vales of the olden world; for though historic association and the spell of poetry have consecrated the borders of *Leman* and the laurel groves of *Tempe*, and Providence has touched both with the finger of beauty, yet does our fancy, in either, dwell upon objects which are not so much the adjuvants of romance as of sentiment; in both, we gather food rather for feeling than imagination,—we live over thoughts which are generated by memory, and our conceptions are the reproductions of experience. But poetry has added no plenary charm, history has cast no over-sufficient light on the haunts of *Montezuma*; on the *Valley of Lakes*, though filled with the hum of life, the mysteries of backward years are yet brooding; and the marvels of human destiny are whispered to our ears, in the sigh of every breeze,—in the rustling of every tree which it stirs on the shore, and in the sound of every ripple it curls up on the lake. One chapter only of its history (and that how full of marvels!) has been written, or preserved; the rest is a blank: a single chain of vicissitudes,—a few consecutive links in the concatenation of events,—have escaped; the rest is a secret, strange, captivating, and pregnant of possibilities. This is the proper field for romantic musings.

So, at least, thought a traveller,—or, to speak more strictly, a rambler, whose idle wanderings from place to

place, directed by ennui or whim, did not deserve the name of travels,—who sat, one pleasant evening of October, 183—, on the hill of Chapoltepec, regarding the spectacle which is disclosed from the summit of that fair promontory.

The hum of the city came faintly to his ear ; the church-towers flung their long shadows over the gardened roofs ; the wildfowl flapped the white wing over the distant sheets of water, which stretched, in a chain, from Chalco to San Cristobal ; the shouts of Indian boatmen were heard, at a distance, on the canal of La Viga, and the dark forms of others, trotting along the causeway that borders it, were seen returning to their huts among the *Chinampas*. Quiet stole over the valley ; the lizard crept to his hole ; the bat woke up in the ruined chambers of the viceroy's palace, that crowns the hill of Chapoltepec, or started away from his den among the leaves of those mossy, majestic, and indeed colossal, cypresses, which, at its base, overshadow the graves of Aztec kings and sultanas. At last, the vesper-bells sounded in the city, and the sun stooped under the western hills, leaving his rays still glittering, with such hues as are only seen in a land of mountains, on the grand peaks of Popocatepetl and the White Woman, the farthest but yet the noblest summits of all in that girdle of mountain magnificence, which seems to shut out Mexico from the rest of the world.

As these bright tints faded into a mellow and harmonious lustre, casting a sort of radiant obscurity over vale and mountain, lake and steeple, the thoughts of the wanderer, (for the romance of the spectacle and the hour had pervaded his imagination,) crept back to the ages of antiquity, and to those mystic races of men, the earliest of the land, who had built their cities and dug their graves in this Alpine paradise, now possessed by a race of whom their world had not dreamed. He gazed and mused, until fancy peopled the scene around him with spectral life, and his spirit's eye was opened on spectacles never more to be

revealed to the corporeal organ. It opened on the day when the land was a wilderness, shaking for the first time under the foot of a stranger; and he beheld, as in a vision, the various emigrations and irruptions into the vale, of men born in other climates. They came like the tides of ocean, and, as such, passed away,—like shadows, and so departed; the history of ages was compressed into the representation of a moment, and an hundred generations, assembled together as one people, rushed by in successive apparitions.

First, over the distant ridges of Nochistongo, there stole, or seemed to steal, a multitude of men, worn with travel, yet bearing idols on their backs, in whose honour, for now they had reached their land of promise, they built huge pyramids, to outlive their gods and themselves; and, scattering over the whole plain, covered it at once with corn-fields and cities. The historian (for this unknown race brought with it science as well as religion,) sat him in the grove, to trace the pictured annals of his age; the astronomer ascended to the tower, to observe the heavens, and calculate the seasons, of the new land; while the multitude, forgetting the austere climes of their nativity, sat down in peace and joy, under the vines and fruit-trees that made their place of habitation so beautiful. Thus they rested and multiplied, until the barbarians of the hills,—the earlier races, and perhaps the aborigines of the land,—descended to take counsel of their wisdom, and follow in the ways of civilization. Then came a cloud, bringing a pestilence, in whose hot breath the rivers vanished, the lakes turned to dust and the mountains to volcanoes, the trees crackled and fell as before a conflagration, and men lay scorched with the leaves, as thick and as dead, on the plain; and the few who had strength to fly, betook themselves to the hills and the seaside, to forget their miseries and their arts, and become barbarians.—Thus began, and thus ended, in Mexico, the race of *Toltecs*, the first and the most civilized of which Mexican hieroglyphics,—the legacy

of this buried people to their successors,—have preserved the memory.

But the rains fell at last, the lakes filled, the forests grew ; and other tribes,—the *Chechemecs* and *Acolhuacans*, with others, many in number and strangers to each other,—coming from the same distant North, but bringing not the civilization of the first pilgrims, sat in their seats, and mingling together into one people, began, at last, after long seasons of barbarism, to emerge from the gloom of ignorance, and acquire the arts, and understand the destinies of man.

To these came, by the same trodden path, a herd of men, ruder than any who had yet visited the southern valleys,—*Aztecs* in family, but called by their neighbours and foes, *Nahuatlacas*, or People of the Lakes,—consisting of many tribes, the chief of which was that which bore upon a throne of bulrushes an image of the god Mexitli, the Destroyer, from whom, in its days of grandeur, it took its name. From this crew of savages, the most benighted and blood-thirsty, and, at first, the feeblest of all,—so base that history presents them as the only nation of bondmen known to the region of Anahuac, and so sordid that, in the festivals of religion, they could provide for their deity only the poor offering of a knife and flower,—fated now to fight the battles of their task-masters, and now condemned to knead the bread of independence from the fetid plants and foul reptiles of the lake ;—from this herd of barbarians, grew, as it seemed, in a moment's space, the vast, the powerful, and, in many respects, the magnificent empire of the Montezumas. In his mind's eye, the stranger could perceive the salt Tezcuco, restored to its ancient limits, beating again upon the porphyry hill on which he sat, and the City of the Island, with her hundred temples and her thousand towers, rising from the shadows, and heaving again with the impulses of nascent civilization. It was at this moment, when the travail of centuries was about to be recompensed, when

the carved statue, the work of many successive Pygmalions, was beginning to breathe the breath, and feel the instincts of moral animation, that a mysterious destiny trampled upon the little spark, and crushed to atoms the body it was warming. From the eastern hills came the voice of the Old World—the sound of the battle-trumpet ; the smoke of artillery rolled over the lake ; and, in a moment more, the shout of conquest and glory was answered by the groan of a dying nation.

As this reverie ended in the brain of the stranger, and the conqueror and the captive of the vision vanished away together, he began to contrast in his mind the past condition of the new world with the present, and particularly of those two portions, which, at the time of their invasion, had outlived the barbarism of nature, and were teeming with the evidences of incipient greatness. As for this fair valley of Mexico, there was scarcely an object either of beauty or utility, the creation of Christian wants or Christian taste, to be seen, for which his memory could not trace a rival, or superior, which existed in the day of paganism. The maize fields, the maguey plantations, the orchards and flower-gardens, that beautify the plains and sweeping slopes,—these were here, long ages ago, with the many villages that glisten among them,—all indeed but the white church and steeple ; the lakes which are now noisome pools,—were they not lovelier when they covered the pestilential fens, and when the rose-garden floated over their blue surface ? The long rows of trees marking the line of the great *Calzadas*, or causeways, the approaches to Mezico, but poorly supply the place of aboriginal groves, the haunts of the doe and the centzontli, while the calzadas themselves, stretching along over bog and morass, have entirely lost the charm they possessed, when washed, on either side, by rolling surges ; even the aqueducts, though they sprang not from arch to arch, over the valley, as at the present time, were not wanting ; and where the church spires of the metropolis

pierce the heaven, the sacred tabernacles of the gods rose from the summits of pyramids. The changes in the physical spectacle among the valleys of Peru were perhaps not much greater; but what happy mutations in the character and condition of man, what advance of knowledge and virtue, had repaid the havoc and horror which were let loose, three hundred years ago, on the lands of Montezuma and the Incas? The question was one to which the rambler could not conceive an answer without pain.

‘The ways of Providence,’ he murmured, ‘are indeed inscrutable; the designs of Him who layeth the corner-stone and buildeth up the fabric of destiny, unfathomable. Two mighty empires,—the only states which seemed to be leading the new world to civilization,—were broken, and at an expense of millions of lives, barbarously destroyed; and for what purpose? to what good end? How much better or happier are the present races of Peru and Mexico, than the past? Hope speaks in the breath of fancy—time may, perhaps, teach us the lesson of mystery; and these magnificent climates, now given up, a second time, to the sway of man in his darkest mood,—to civilized savages and Christian pagans,—may be made the seats of peace and wisdom; and perhaps, if mankind should again descend into the gloom of the middle ages, their inhabitants will preserve, as did the more barbarous nations in all previous retrogressions, the brands from which to rekindle the torches of knowledge, and thus be made the engines of the reclamation of a world.’

The traveller muttered the conclusion of his speculations aloud, and, insensibly to himself, in the Spanish tongue, totally unconscious of the presence of a second person, until made aware of it by a voice exclaiming suddenly, as if in answer, and in the same language—

“Right! very right! *pecador de mí!* sinner that I am, that *I* should not have thought it, for the honour of God and my country!”

The voice was sharp, abrupt, and eager, but very quavering. The stranger turned, and perceived that the words came from a man dressed in a long loose surtout or gown of black texture, none of the newest, with a hat of Manilla grass, umbrageous as an oak-top. He looked old and infirm; his person was very meager; his cheeks were of a mahogany hue, and hollow, and the little hair that stirred over them in the evening breeze, was of a sable silvered: his eyes were large, restless, exceedingly bright, and irascible. He carried swinging in his hand, without seeming to use it much, (for, in truth, his gait was too irregular and capricious to admit such support,) a staff, to the head of which was tied a bunch of flowers; and he bore under his arm, as they seemed to the unpractised eye of the observer, a bundle of books, a cluster of veritable quartos, so antique and worn, that the string knotted round each, seemed necessary to keep together its dilapidated pages. The whole air of the man was unique, but not mean; and the traveller did not doubt, at the first glance, that he belonged to some inferior order of ecclesiastics, and was perhaps the curate of a neighbouring village.

"Right! you have said the truth!" he continued, regarding the traveller eagerly, and, as the latter thought, with profound veneration; "I must speak with you, very learned stranger, for I perceive you are a philosopher. Very great thanks to you! may you live a thousand years! In a single word, you have revealed the secret that has been the enigma of a long life, made good the justice of heaven, and defended the fame of my country. God be thanked! I am grateful to your wisdom: you speak like a saint: you are a philosopher!"

The traveller stared with surprise on the speaker; but though thus moved by the abruptness of the address, and somewhat inclined to doubt its seriousness, there was something so unusual in the mode and quality of the compliment as to mollify any indignation which he might have felt rising in his breast.

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"Father," said he, "reverend father—for I perceive you are one of the clergy——"

"The poor licentiate, Cristobal Johualicahuatzin, curate of the parish of San Pablo de Chinchaluca," interrupted the ecclesiastic meekly, and in fact with the greatest humility.

"Then, indeed, very excellent and worthy father Cristobal," resumed the stranger, courteously, "though I do not pretend to understand you——"

The padre raised his head; his meekness vanished; he eyed the traveller with a sharp and indignant frown:

"*Gachupin!*" he cried; "you are a man with two souls: you are wise and you are foolish, and you speak bad Spanish!—Why do you insult me?"

The stranger stared at his new acquaintance with fresh amazement.

"Insult you, father!" he exclaimed. "I declare to you, I have, this moment, woke out of a revery; and I scarcely know what you have said or what I have answered, or what you are saying and what I am answering. If I have offended you, I ask your pardon."

"Enough! right!" said the curate, with an air of satisfaction; "you are a philosopher; you are right. You were in a revery; you have done me no wrong. I have intruded upon your musings,—I beg your pardon. I thank you very heartily. You have instructed my ignorance, and appeased my repining; you have taught me the answer to a vast and painful riddle; and now I perceive why Providence hath given over my native land to seeming ruin, and permitted it to become a place of dust and sand, of dry-rot and death. The day of darkness shall come again,—it is coming; man merges again into gloom, and now we fall into the age of stone, when the hearts of men shall be as flint. This then shall be the valley of resuscitation, after it is first *plenus ossibus*, full of skeletons, an ossuary—a place of moral ossification. Here, then, shall the wind blow, the voice sound, the spirit move, the bone unite to his bone,

the sinew come with the flesh, and light and knowledge, animating the mass into an army, send it forth to conquer the world ;—not as an army of flesh, with drum and trump, sword and spear, banner and cannon, to kill and destroy, to ravage and depopulate ; but as a phalanx of angels, with healing on their wings, to harmonize and enlighten, to pacify and adorn. Yes, you have taught me this, excellent sage ! and you shall know my gratitude : for great joy is it to the child of Moteuczoma, to know there shall be an end to this desolation, this anarchy, this horror !

Vigilare metu exanimis, noctesque diesque
Formidare :————

Came I into the world to watch in sorrow and fear for ever ?
Hijo mio ! give me thy hand ; I love thee. The vale of Anahuac is not deformed for nothing ; Christian man has ruined it, but not for a long season !”

The Cura delivered this rhapsody with extreme animation ; his eye kindled, he spoke with a rapid and confused vehemence ; and the stranger began to doubt the stability of his understanding. He flung his bundle to the earth, and grasped the hand of the philosopher, who, until this moment, was ignorant of the depth of his own wisdom. While still in perplexity, unable to comprehend the strange character, or indeed the strange fancies to which he had given tongue, the padre looked around him with complacency on the scene, over which a tropical moon was rising to replace the luminary of day, and continued, with a gravity which puzzled as much as did his late vivacity,—

“ It is very true ; I regret it no longer, but it cannot be denied : The cutting through yonder hill of Nochistongo has given the last blow in a system of devastation ; the canal of Huehuetoca has emptied the golden pitcher of Moteuczoma. It has converted the valley into a desert, and will depopulate it.—Men cannot live upon salt.”

“ A desert, father !”

“ *Hijo mio !* do you pretend to deny it ?” cried the Cura,

picking up his bundle, and thumping it with energy. "I aver, and I will prove it to your satisfaction, out of these books, which—But hold! Are you a spy? will you betray me? No; you are not of Mexico: the cameo on your breast bears the device of stars, the symbol of intellectual as well as political independence. I reverence that flag; I saw it, when your envoy, attacked by an infuriated mob, in his house in yonder very city, (I stole there in spite of them!) sprang upon the balcony, and waved it abroad in the street. Frenzy vanished at the sight: it was the banner of man's friend!—No! you are no fool with a free arm, a licentious tongue, and a soul in chains. Therefore, you shall look into these pages, concealed for years from the jealousy of misconstruction, and the penal fires of intolerance; and they shall convince you, that this hollow of the mountain, as it came from the hands of God, and as it was occupied by the children of nature, was the loveliest of all the vales of the earth; and that, since Christian man has laid upon it his innovating finger, its beauty has vanished, its charm decayed; and it has become a place fitting only for a den of thieves, a refuge for the snake and the water-newt, the wild-hog and the vulture!"

"To my mind, father," said the American, no longer amazed at the extravagant expressions of the ecclesiastic, for he was persuaded his wits were disordered, "to my mind, it is still the most charming of valleys; and were it not that the folly and madness of its inhabitants, the contemptible ambition of its rulers, and the servile supineness of its people,—in fine, the general disorganization of all its elements, both social and political, have made it a sort of Pandemonium,—a spot wherein splendour and grandeur (at least the possibilities and rudiments of grandeur,) are mixed with all the causes of decline and perdition, I should be fain to dream away my life on the borders of its blue lakes, and under the shadow of its volcanic barriers."

"True, true, true! you have said it!" replied the curate,

eagerly ; “ the ambition of public men ; the feverish servility of the people, forgetful of themselves, of their own rights and interests, and ever anxious to yoke themselves to the cars of demagogues, to the wires wherewith they may be worked as puppets, and giving their blood to aggrandize these—the natural enemies of order and justice, of reason and tranquillity ; is not this enough to demoralize and destroy ? What people is like mine ? Wo for us ! The bondmen of the old world wake from sleep and live, while we, in the blessed light of sunshine, wrap the mantle round our eyes, sleep, and perish ! Revolution after revolution, frenzy after frenzy ! and what do we gain ? By revolution, other nations are liberated, but we, by revolution, are enslaved. ‘ Nil medium est ’—is there no happy mean ? ”

“ It is true,” said the American. “ But let us not speak of this : it is galling to be able to inveigh against folly, without possessing the medicament for its cure.”

“ Thou art an American of the North,” said the Cura ; “ thy people are wise, thy rulers are servants, and you are happy ! Why, then, art thou here ? I thought thee a sage, but, I perceive, thou hast the rashness of youth. Art thou here to learn to despise thine own institutions ? Why dost thou remain ? the death-wind comes from the southern lakes”—(in fact, at this moment, the breeze from the south, rising with the moon, brought with it a mephitic odour, the effluvium of a bog, famous, even in Aztec days, as the breath of pestilence ;) “ the death-wind breathes on thee : even as this will infect thy blood, when it has entered into thy nostrils, disordering thy body, until thou learnest to loathe all that seems to thee now, in this scenery, to be so goodly and fair ; so will the gusts of anarchy, rising from a distempered republic, disease thy imagination, until thou comest to be disgusted with the yet untainted excellence of thine own institutions, because thou perceivest the evils of their perversion. Arise, and begone ; remain no longer with us ; leave this land, and bear with thee to thine own,

these volumes,—the poor remnants of another Sibylline library,—which will teach thee to appreciate and preserve, even as thy soul's ransom, the pure and admirable frame of government, which a beneficent power has suffered you to enjoy."

"And what, then, are these?" demanded the traveller, curiously, laying his hand on the bundle, "which can teach Americans to admire the beauty of a republic, and yet are not given to thine own countrymen?"

"They are," said the curate, "the fruits of years of reflection and toil, of deep research and profound speculation. They contain a history of Mexico, which, when they were perfect, that is, before my countrymen," (and here the Cura began to whisper, and look about him in alarm, as if dreading the approach of listeners,)—"before my countrymen were taught to fear them and to destroy, contained the chronicles of the land, from the time that the Toltecas were exiled from *Huehuetapallan*, more than twelve hundred years ago, down to the moment when Augustin climbed up to the throne, which Hidalgo tore from the Gachupins. A history wherein," continued the padre, with great complacency, "I flatter myself, though Mexicans have found much to detest, Americans will discover somewhat to approve."

"What is it," said the rambler, "which your people have found so objectionable?"

"Listen," said the padre, "and you shall be informed. In me,"—here he paused, and surveyed his acquaintance with as much majesty as he could infuse into his wasted figure and hollow countenance,—"in me you behold a descendant of Moteuczoma Xocojotzin."

"Moteuczoma what?" exclaimed the traveller.

"Are you so ignorant, then?" demanded the padre, in a heat, "that you must be told who was Moteuczoma Xocojotzin, that is, *the younger*,—the second of that name who reigned over Mexico?—the very magnificent and unfortunate emperor so basely decoyed into captivity, so ruthlessly *oppressed*, and, as I may say, by a figure of speech, (for, lite-

rally, it is not true) so truculently slain, by the illustrious Don Hernan Cortes, the conqueror of Mexico? Perhaps you are also ignorant of the great names of Tizoc, of Xocotzin, and of Ixtlilxochitl?"

"I have no doubt," replied the American, with courteous humility, "that in the histories of Mexico, which I have ever delighted to read,—in the books of De Solis, of Clavigero, of Bernal Diaz del Castillo, and especially in that of Dr. Robertson,—I have met these illustrious names; but you must allow, that, to one ignorant of the language, and of the mode of pronouncing such conglomerated grunts, it must be extremely difficult, if not wholly impossible, to rivet them in the memory."

The curate snatched up his bundle, and surveyed the stranger with a look in which it was hard to tell whether anger or contempt bore the greater sway.

"De Solis! Diaz! Clavigero! Robertson!" he at last exclaimed, irefully. "*Basta! demasiado!* enough—too much! What a *niño*, a little child, a *pobre Yankee*, have I fallen upon! That I should waste my words on a man who studies Mexican history out of the books of these jolterheads!"

The padre was about to depart, without bestowing another word on the offender. The American was amused at the ready transition of the curate from deep reverence to the most unbounded contempt. He was persuaded the wits of the poor father were unsettled, and felt there was the greater need to humour and appease him: and, besides, he was curious to discover what would be the end of the adventure.

"Father," said he, with composure, "before you condemn me for acquiring my little knowledge from these books, you should put it in my power to read better."—The padre looked back.—"What information should be expected from incompetent writers? from jolterheads? When I have perused the histories of father Cristobal, I will then be *my* fault, if I am found ignorant of the names of his imperial ancestors."

"*Ay de mi !*" said the curate, striking his forehead ; " why did I not think of that before ? *Santos santisimos !* I am not so quick-witted as I was before. I could forgive you more readily, had you not named to me that infidel Scotchman, who calls the superb Moteuczoma a savage, and all the Tlatoani, the great princes, and princesses, the people and all, barbarians ! But what more could you expect of a heretic ? I forgive you, my son—you are a Christian ?"

" A Christian, father ; but not of the Catholic faith."

" You will be damned !" said the curate, hastily.

" A point of mere creed, perhaps I should say, mere form—"

" Say nothing about it ; form or creed, ceremony or canon, you are in the way to be lost. Open your ears, unbind your eyes—hear, see, and believe !—Poor, miserable darkened creature ! how can your heretical understanding be made to conceive and profit by the great principles of philosophy, when it is blind to the truths of religion ?"

" Reverend padre," said the traveller, drily, " my people are a people of heretics, and yours of Catholic believers. Which has better understood, or better practised, the principles of the philosophy you affect to admire ?"

The padre smote his forehead a second time : " The sneer is, in this case, just ! The sin of the enlightened is greater than the crime of the ignorant, and so is the punishment : the chosen people of God were chastised with frequent bondage, and finally with expatriation and entire dispersion, for crimes, which, in heathen nations, were punished only with wars and famine. But let us not waste time in argument : as babes may be made the organs of wisdom, so may heretics be suffered as the instruments of worldly benefaction. What thou sayest, is true ; unbelievers as ye are, ye will comprehend and be instructed by truths, which, in this land, would be misconceived and opposed ; and from you may the knowledge you gain, be reflected back on my own people. In these books, which I commit to you for a great purpose, you will learn who were those worthies of whom I spoke. You will perceive how Ixtlilxochitl, the

king of Tezcuco, was descended from the house that gave birth to Moteuczoma. This illustrious name inherit I from my mother. With its glory, it has conferred the penalty to be suspected, opposed, and trampled. Three historians of the name, my ancestors, have already written in vain; jealousy has locked up their works in darkness, in the veil of manuscript; the privilege of chronicling and perverting the history of the land is permitted only to Spaniards, to strangers, to Gachupins. Twenty years since, and more, the books I composed, wherein the truth was told, and the injustice of Spanish writers made manifest, were condemned by ignorance and bigotry to such flames as consumed, at Tezcuco, all the native chronicles of Anahuac. But what was written in my books, was also recorded in the brain; fire could not be put to my memory. Twenty years of secret labour have repaired the loss. Behold! here is my history; I give it to you.—My enemies must be content with the ashes!”

The padre rubbed his hands with exultation, as the traveller surveyed the bundle.

“Why should you fear a similar fate for these volumes, now?” said the latter. “Times are changed.”

“The times, but not the people. Hide them, let no man see them; or the pile will be kindled again; all will be lost—I cannot repair the loss a second time, for now I am old! Five years have I borne them with me, night and day, seeking for some one cunning and faithful, wise like thyself, to whom to commit them. I have found thee; thou art the man; I am satisfied: *buen provecho*, much good may they do you,—not you only, but your people,—not your people alone, but the world! Affection for country is love of mankind; true patriotism is philanthropy.—Five years have I borne them with me, by night and by day.”

“Really, I think that this betokened no great fear for their safety.”

The padre laughed. “Though the Gachupin and the

bigot would rob me of a Spanish dissertation, yet neither would envy me the possession of a few rolls of hieroglyphics."

As he spoke, he knelt upon the ground, untied the string that secured one of the apparent volumes, and, beginning to unfold the MS., as one would a very nicely secured traveller's map, displayed, in the moonlight, a huge sheet of maguey paper, emblazoned in gaudy colours with all kinds of inexplicable devices. As he exhibited his treasure, he looked up for approbation to the American. The '*pobre Yankee*' surveyed him with a humorous look :

"Father," said he, "you have succeeded to admiration, under this goodly disguise, not only in concealing your wisdom from the penetration of your countrymen, but, as I think, the whole world."

The padre raised his finger to his nose very significantly, saying, with a chuckle of delight,—the delight of a diseased brain in the success of its cunning,—

"This time, I knew I should throw dust in their eyes, even though they might demand, for their satisfaction, to look into my work. You perceive, that this volume, done up after the true manner of ancient Mexican books, unrolls from either end. The first pages, and the last, of each volume, contain duplicates of the first and the last chapters, done in Mexican characters : the rest is in Spanish, and, I flatter myself, in very choice Spanish. *Hoc ego rectè*—I knew what I was about.—One does not smuggle diamonds in sausages, without stuffing in some of the minced meat.—Here is the jewel !"

So saying, and spreading the sheet at its full length, so as to discover his hidden records, the padre rose to his feet, and began to dance about with exultation.

"And what am *I* to do with these volumes ?" said the traveller, after pondering awhile over the manuscripts.

"What are you to do with them ? Dios mio ! are you so stupid ? Take them, hide them in your bosom, as you would the soul of some friend you were smuggling into

paradise. Leave this land forthwith, on any pretence ; bear them with you ; translate them into your own tongue, and let them be given to the world. If they do not, after they have received the seal of your approbation, make their way back to this land, they will, at least, serve some few of the many objects, for which they were written : they will set the character of my great ancestors in its true light, and teach the world to think justly of the unfortunate people from whom I have the honour to be descended ; and, in addition, they will open the eyes of men to some of the specks of barbarism which yet sully their own foreheads. As for my countrymen, were it even possible they could be persuaded to spare these pages, and to read them, they would read them in vain. They are a thousand years removed from civilization, and the wisdom of this book would be to them as folly. The barbaric romance which loiters about the brains even of European nations, is the pith and medulla of a Mexican head. The poetry of bloodshed, the sentiment of renown,—the first and last passion, and the true test, of the savage state,—are not yet removed from us. We are not yet civilized up to the point of seeing that reason reprobates, human happiness denounces, and God abhors, the splendour of contention. Your own people—the happiest and most favoured of modern days,—are, perhaps, not so backward.”

The heretic sighed.—The padre went on, and with the smile of generosity,—tying, at the same time, the string that secured the volume, and knotting it again into the bundle.

“The profits which may accrue from the publication, I freely make over to you, as some recompense for the trouble of translation, and the danger you run in assuming the custody. Danger, I say,—heaven forbid I should not acquaint you, that the discovery of these volumes on your person, besides insuring their speedy and irretrievable destruction, will expose you to punishment, perhaps to the flames which will be kindled for them ; and this the more readily, that you are an unbeliever.—Pray, my son, listen

to me ; suffer me to convert you. Alas ! you shake your head !—What a pity, I am compelled to entrust this great commission to a man who refuses to be a Christian !”

“ Buen padre, let us say nothing about that : judge me not by the creed I profess, but by the acts I perform. Let us despatch this business : the moon is bright, but the air is raw and unwholesome. I would willingly do your bidding, not doubting that the world will be greatly advantaged thereby. But, father, here is the difficulty :—To do justice to your composition, I should, myself, possess the skill of an author ; but, really, I feel my incompetency—I am no bookmaker.”

“ And am I ?” said the descendant of Moteuczoma, indignantly ; “ I am an historian !”

“ I crave your pardon ;—but *I* am not.”

“ And who said you were ?” demanded the historian, with contempt. “ Do I expect of you the qualifications or the labours of an historian ? Do I ask you to write a book ? to rake for records in dusty closets and wormy shelves ? to decypher crabbed hands and mouldered prints ? to wade through the fathers of stupidity, until your brain turns to dough, and your eyes to pots of glue ? to gather materials with the labour of a pearl-diver, and then to digest and arrange, to methodise and elucidate, with the patient martyrdom of an almanac-maker ? Who asks you this ? Do I look for a long head, an inspired brain ? a wit, a genius ? *Ni por sueño*,—by no means. I ask you to read and render,—to translate ;—to do the tailor’s office, and make my work a new coat ! Any one can do this !”

“ Father,” said the traveller, “ your arguments are unanswerable ; do me the favour to send, or to bring, your production to the city, to the Calle——”

“ Send ! bring ! *Se burla om.* ?” cried the padre, looking aghast. “ Do you want to ruin me ? Know, that by the sentence of the archbishop and the command of the viceroy, I am interdicted from the city : and know that I would *sooner* put my soul into the keeping of a parrot, than my *books* into the hands of a messenger !”

"A viceroy, did you say, father? It has been many long years since a king's ape has played his delegated antics in Mexico. To please you, however, I will bear the sacred treasure in my own hands; earnestly desiring you, notwithstanding your fears, which are now groundless, and the prohibition, which must be at this period invalid, to do me the favour of a visit, in person, as soon as may suit your conveniency; inasmuch as there are many things I esteem needful to be——"

The padre had seized on the hands of the speaker, in testimony of his delight; but before the latter had concluded his discourse, he was interrupted by a voice at a distance, calling, as it seemed, on the Cura; for this worthy, starting with fear, and listening a moment, suddenly took to his heels, and before the traveller could give vent to his surprise, was hidden among the shadows of the cypress trees.

"May I die," said the philosopher, in no little embarrassment, "but this lunatic Cura has left me to lug away his lucubrations,—his hieroglyphical infants, for which I am to make new coats,—on my own shoulders! Well! I can but carry them to the city, and seek some means of restoring them to his friends, or commit them to a more fitting depository. Pray heaven I meet no drunken Indian, or debauched soldado on my way."—

By great good fortune, he was able, in a few days, with the assistance of a friendly Mexican, to solve the secret of the padre's confidence.

"You have seen him then?" said the excellent Señor Don Andres Santa-Maria de Arcaboba, laughing heartily at the grave earnestness with which his heretical friend inquired after the eccentric padre. "He offered you his hieroglyphics? Ah, I perceive! No man passes scot-free the crazy Cura. Ever his books in his hand, much praise with the offer, and seven times seven maledictions when you refuse his bantlings."

"He is crazy, then?"

"*Demonios!* were you long finding it out? Ever since

the old archbishop burned his first heathenish volumes, he has done naught but——”

“I beg your pardon.—Burn his books?—the old archbishop?—Pray enlighten me a little on the subject of the good father’s history.

“’Tis done in a moment,” said Don Andres ; “ the only wonder is that he did not himself give you the story ; that being, commonly, the prelude to his petition. The mother of Don Cristobal was an Indian *damisela*, delighting in the euphonical cognomen of Ixtlilxochitl ; a name, which, I am told, belonged to some old pagan king or other, the Lord knows who—as for myself, I know nothing about it. But this set the padre mad, or, what’s the same thing, it made him an historian.—’Tis a silly thing to trouble one’s noddle about the concerns of our granddads : let them sleep ! rest to their bones—*Asi sea !*—They made him a licenciado, and then Cura of some hacienda or other, out among the hills—I know nothing about it. He wrote a book, in which he proved that the old heathen Montezuma, the great Cacique, was a saint, and Hernan Cortes, who conquered the land, a sinner. It may be so—*Quien sabe ?* who knows ? who cares ? This was before the revolution—that is, before the first : (we have had five hundred since ;—I never counted them.) Somehow, the viceroy Vanegas took a dislike to the book, and so did the archbishop. They set their heads together, got the good old fathers of the Brotherhood—(We have no Brotherhood now,—neither religious nor social : every man is his own brother, as the king says in the English play.—Did you ever read Calderon ?) They got the old fathers to vote it dangerous,—I suppose, because they did not understand it. So they burned it, and commanded Johualicahuatzin—(that’s another Indian king—so he calls himself.—His father was the Señor Marhojo, a creole, a lieutenant in the viceroy’s horse, a very worthy Christian, who was hanged somewhere, for sedition. But Cristobal writes after his mother’s name, as being more royal.)—*What was I saying ?* Oh, yes !—They ordered the licen-

tiate back to his hacienda. Then, what became of him, the lord knows ; I don't.—Then came Hidalgo, the valiant priest of Dolores, with his raggamuffin patriots,—(I don't mean any reflection, being a patriot myself, though no fighter ; but Hidalgo had a horrid crew about him !) Where was I ? Oh, ay,—Hidalgo came to knock the city about our ears ; and Cristobal, being seized with a fit of blood-thirstiness, joins me the gang. They say, he came with an old sabre of flint—I don't know the name ; it belonged to some king in the family. Then Calleja, whom they made viceroy—the devil confound him ! (He cut my uncle's throat, with some fourteen thousand others, at Guanaxuato, one day, to save powder.)—Calleja chased Hidalgo to Aculco, and, there, he beat him. Cristobal's brother (he *had* a brother, a very fine young fellow, a patriot major ;) was killed at Cristobal's side ; Cristobal was knocked on the head,—somebody said, with his own royal weapon :—I don't know, —where's the difference ? They broke his skull, and took him prisoner. *Y pues ?* what then ? Being a notorious crazy man, and very savagely mauled, they did not hang him. Ever since, he has been madder than ever. He writes histories, and, to save them from viceroys, (he takes all our presidents for viceroys : to my mind, they *are* ; but that's nothing. You know Bustamente ? a mighty great man : Santa Aña will beat him—but don't say so !) Well, to save his books from the president-viceroys, or viceroy-presidents, Cristobal offers them to every body he meets, with a petition to take them over the seas and publish them.—That's all !—The Indians at the hacienda love him, and take care of him.—Ha, ha ! he caught you, did he ? What did he say ?

“ He gave me his books,” said the traveller.

“ *Fuego !* you took them ? Ha, ha ! now will the poor padre die happy !”

“ I will return them to his relations.”

“ Relations ! they are all in heaven ; he is the last of the *Ixtlilxochitls* ! Ha, ha ! I beg your pardon, *amigo mio* !

beg your pardon ; but if you offer them to any body, never believe me, but folks will take you for Cristobal the Second, *el segundo maniatico*, or some one he has hired to do the work of donation. Ha, ha ! cielo mio, pity me ! say nothing about it ;—burn them.”

“ At least, let us look over them.”

“ *Olla podrida !* look over a beggar’s back ! a pedler’s sack ! or a dictionary !—Any thing reasonable. Burn them ; or take them to America, to your North, and deposit them in a museum, as the commonplace books of Montezuma. *Vamos ; que me manda vm. ?* will you ride to the Alameda ? —Pobre Cristobal ! he will die happy.”——

The traveller returned to his own land : he bore with him the books of Cristobal. Twenty times did he essay to make examination of their contents, and twenty times did he yawn, in mental abandonment, over their chaotic pages,—not, indeed, that they seemed so *very* incoherent in style and manner, but because the cautious historian, as it seemed, with a madman’s subtlety, had hit upon the device of so scattering and confusing the pages, that it was next to impossible that any one, after reading the first, should discover the clue to the second. Each volume, as has been hinted, consisted of a single great sheet, folded up in the manner of a pocket map ; both sides were very carefully written over, the paragraphs clustered in masses or pages, but without numbers ; and, but for the occurrence, here and there, of pages of hideous hieroglyphics, such as were never seen in a Christian book, the whole did not seem unlike to a printed sheet, before it is carried to the binder. The task of collating and methodising the disjointed portions, required, in the words of the padre himself, the devotedness which he had figured as ‘the patient martyrdom of an almanac-maker ;’ it was entirely too much for the traveller. He laid the riddle aside for future investigation : but Cristobal was not forgotten.

A year afterwards, in reading a Mexican gazette, which had fallen into his hands, his eye wandered to the little corner which appeals so placidly to the feelings of the contem-

plative,—the place of obituaries. His attention was instantly captivated by a name in larger characters than the others. Was it? could it be? Pobre Cristobal!—‘*El Licenciado Cristobal Santiago Marhojo y Ixtlilxochitl, Cura de la Hacienda de Chinchaluca, ordinariamente llamado El Maniatco Historiador*’——. The same! But what is this? the common immortality of a long paragraph?—The heretic rubbed his eyes. “Several MSS., historical memoirs, relating to the earlier ages of the Aztec monarchy, the work of his own hand, have been discovered; and a lucky accident revealing the expedient which he adopted to render them illegible, or at least inexplicable to common readers, they have been found to be in all respects sane and coherent, the work less of a madman than an eccentric but profound scholar. The pages are arranged like those in the form of the printer; and, being cut by a knife without unfolding——” The heretic started up, and drew forth the long-neglected tomes.—“It is said that a North American, a year ago, received, and carried away, many of the volumes, which the eccentric clergyman was accustomed to offer to strangers. It is hoped, if this should meet his eye——” ‘Enough! if thy work be at all readable, departed padre, it shall have the new coat!’

Great was the surprise of the philosopher, when having, at the suggestion of the gazetteer, cut the folded sheet of a volume, he beheld the chaos of history reduced to order. There they were, the annals of Aztecs and Toltecs, of Chemecs and Chiapanecs, and a thousand other *Ecs*, from the death of Nezahualcojotl, the imperial poet, up to the confusion of tongues. “Here’s a nut for the philosophers,” quoth the traveller; “but now for a peep at Montezuma!—Poor Cristobal! what a wonderful big book you have made of it!”

How many days and nights were given to the examination of the history, we do not think fit to record. It is enough, that the inheritor of this treasure discovered with

satisfaction, that, if Cristobal had been mad, he had been mad after a rule,—dramatically so : he was sane in the right places. A thousand eccentricities were, indeed, imbodyed in his work, the result, doubtless, of a single aberration, in which he persuaded himself that men were yet barbarians, and that civilization, even to the foremost of nations, was yet unknown. Under the influence of this conceit, he was constantly betrayed, for he was a philanthropist, into sharp animadversion upon popular morals ; and he stigmatized as vices of the most brutal character, many of those human peculiarities which the world has consented to esteem the highest virtues. In other respects, he was sane, somewhat judicious, and, as far as could be expected in an historian, a teller of the truth.

His work consisted of several divisions ; it was, in fact, a series of annals, relating to different epochs. Of these, that volume which treated of the Conquest of Mexico, had the most charms for the traveller ; and he thought it would possess the most interest for the world. It was this which he determined to introduce to the public. It differed greatly from common histories in one particular ; it descended to minutæ of personal adventure, and was, indeed, as much a general memoir of the great *Conquistadores* as a history of the fall of Tenochtitlan. Of this the writer was himself sensible ; the running title of the division, as recorded in his own hand, being, “ *Una Cronica de la Conquista de Mexico, y Historia verdadera de los Conquistadores, particularmente de esos Caballeros á quienes descuidaron celebrar los Escritores Antiguos. Por Cristobal Johualicahuatzin Santiago Marhojo y Ixtlilxochitl ;*”—that is to say, ‘A Chronicle of the Conquest of Mexico, and true History of the Conquerors, especially of those Cavaliers who were neglected by the ancient authors.’

The first portion of this,—for there were several,—treated of those events which occurred between the departure of the first army of invasion from Cuba, and its expulsion from

Mexico, and this portion the executor of Cristobal resolved to present to the world.

In pursuance of this resolution, he instituted a long and laborious comparison of the MS. with the most authentic printed histories; the result of which was a conviction, (which we beg the reader constantly to bear in mind,) that, although the good padre had introduced, and upon authority which his editor could not discover, the characters of certain worthy cavaliers, of whom he had never heard, the relation, in all other particulars, corresponded precisely with the narratives of the most esteemed writers. The events—the great and the minute alike—of the whole campaign were, in point of fact, identical with those chronicled by the best authors; and in no way did this history differ from others, except in the introduction of the above-mentioned forgotten or neglected cavaliers, such as the knight of Calavar and his faithful esquire, and in the recital of events strictly personal to them. It is true, the narrative was more diffuse, perhaps we should say, verbose; but Cristobal lived in an age of amplification. It was here alone that the traveller felt himself bound to take liberties with the original; for though the march of mind and the general augmentation of ideas, have made prolixity a common characteristic of each man in his own person, they have not made him more tolerant of it in another. He shaved, therefore, and he cut, he amputated and he compressed; and he felt the joy of an editor, when exercising the hydraulic press of the mind.

This will be excused in him. He expunged as much of the philosophy as he could. The few principles at variance with worldly propensities, which he left in the book, must be referred to another responsibility.—The hallucinations of philanthropy are, at the worst, harmless.

For the title adopted in this, the initial chronicle, he confesses himself answerable. The peculiar appetites of the literary community, the result of intellectual dyspepsia,

require and justify empiricism in nomenclature. A good name is sugar and sweetmeats to a bad book. If it should be objected, that he has called the *Historia Verdadera* a romance, let it be remembered, that the world likes romance better than truth, as the booksellers can testify; and that the history of Mexico, under all aspects but that of fiction, is itself—a romance.

NOTE.—It was said by the learned Scaliger, of the Basque language, ‘that those who spoke it were thought to understand one another,—a thing which he did not himself believe.’ For fear that the reader, from the specimens of Mexican words he will meet in this history, should imagine that the Mexican tongue was not meant even to be *spoken*, we think fit to apprise him, that all such words are to be pronounced as they would be uttered by a Spaniard. In his language, for example, the G, when before the vowels E and I, the J always, and, in certain cases, the X, have the value of the aspirate. Thus, the name of the city, the chief scene of our history, has been spelled, at different times, *Mexico*, *Mejico*, and *Megico*; yet is always pronounced *May-he-co*. The sound of our W he represents by HU,—as *Huascar*, for Wascar; and, indeed, JU has nearly the same sound, as in *Juan*. The names Johualicahuatzin, Anahuac, Xocojotzin, Mexitli, and Chihuahua, pronounced Howalicawatzin, Anawac, Hocohotzin, Meheetlee, and Chewawa, will serve for examples. But this is a thing not to be insisted on, so much as the degree of belief which should be accorded to the relation.

Esto importa poco á nuestro cuento: basta que en la narracion de él, no se salga un punto de la verdad.—*Don Quijote*.

CALAVAR.

CHAPTER I.

IN the year of Grace fifteen hundred and twenty, upon a day in the month of May thereof, the sun rose over the islands of the new deep, and the mountains that divided it from an ocean yet unknown, and looked upon the havoc, which, in the name of God, a Christian people were working upon the loveliest of his regions. He had seen, in the revolution of a day, the strange transformations which a few years had brought upon all the climes and races of his love. The standard of Portugal waved from the minarets of the east; a Portuguese admiral swept the Persian Gulf, and bombarded the walls of Ormuz; a Portuguese viceroy held his court on the shores of the Indian ocean; the princes of the eastern continent had exchanged their bracelets of gold for the iron fetters of the invader; and among the odours of the Spice Islands, the fumes of frankincense ascended to the God of their new masters. He passed on his course: the breakers that dashed upon the sands of Africa, were not whiter than the squadrons that rolled among them; the chapel was built on the shore, and under the shadow of the crucifix was fastened the first rivet in the slavery of her miserable children. Then rose he over the blue Atlantic: the new continent emerged from the dusky deep; the ships of discoverers were penetrating its estuaries and straits, from the Isles of Fire even to the frozen promontories of Labrador; and the roar of cannon went up to heaven, mingled with the groans and blood of *naked savages*. But peace had descended upon

the islands of America; the gentle tribes of these paradises of ocean wept in subjection over the graves of more than half their race; hamlets and cities were springing up in their valleys and on their coasts; the culverin bellowed from the fortress, the bell pealed from the monastery; and the civilization and vices of Europe had supplanted the barbarism and innocence of the feeble native. Still, as he careered to the west, new spectacles were displayed before him; the followers of Balboa had built a proud city on the shores, and were launching their hasty barks on the surges of the New Ocean; the hunter of the Fountain of Youth was perishing under the arrows of the wild warriors of Florida, and armed Spaniards were at last retreating before a pagan multitude. One more sight of pomp and of grief awaited him: he rose on the mountains of Mexico; the trumpet of the Spaniards echoed among the peaks; he looked upon the bay of Ulua, and, as his beams stole tremblingly over the swelling current, they fell upon the black hulls and furled canvas of a great fleet riding tranquilly at its moorings. The fate of Mexico was in the scales of destiny; the second army of invaders had been poured upon her shores. In truth, it was a goodly sight to look upon the armed vessels that thronged this unfrequented bay; for peacefully and majestically they slept on the tide, and as the morning hymn of the mariners swelled faintly on the air, one would have thought they bore with them to the heathen the tidings of great joy, and the goodwill and grace of their divine faith, instead of the earthly passions which were to cover the land with lamentation and death.

With the morning sunbeam, stole into the harbour one of those little caravels, wherein the men of those days dared the perils of unknown deeps, and sought out new paths to renown and fortune; and as she drew nigh to the reposing fleet, the hardy adventurers who thronged her deck, gazed with new interest and admiration on the shores of that empire, the

fame of whose wild grandeur and wealth had already driven from their minds the dreams of Golconda and the Moluccas. No fortress frowned on the low islands, no city glistened among the sand-hills on shore: the surf rolled on the coast of an uninhabited waste: the tents of the armourer and other artisans, the palm-thatched sheds of the sick, and some heaps of military stores, covered with sails, and glimmering in the sun, were the only evidences of life on a beach which was, in after times, to become the site of a rich and bustling port. But beyond the low desert margin of the sea, and over the rank and lovely belt of verdure, which succeeded the glittering sand-hills, rose a rampart of mountains green with an eternal vegetation, over which again peered chain after chain, and crag after crag, with still the majestic Perote and the colossal Orizabo frowning over all, until those who had dwelt among the Pyrenees, or looked upon the Alps, as some of that adventurous company had done, dreamed what wealth should be in a land, whose first disclosure was so full of grandeur.

Of the four-score individuals who crowded the decks of the little caravel, there was not one whose countenance, at that spectacle, did not betray a touch of the enthusiasm,—the mingled lust of glory and of lucre,—which had already transformed so many ruffians into heroes. Among this motley throng might be seen all sorts of martial madmen, from the scarred veteran who had fought the Moors under the walls of Oran, to the runagate stripling who had hanselled his sword of lath on the curs of Seville; from the hidalgo who remembered the pride of his ancestors, in the cloak of his grandsire, to the boor who dreamed of the crown of a pagan emperor, in a leather shirt and cork shoes: here was a brigand, who had cursed the Santa Hermandad of all Castile, and now rejoiced over a land where he could cut throats at his leisure; there a gray-haired extortioner, *whom roguery had reduced to bankruptcy, but who*

hoped to repair his fortune by following the pack of man-hunters, and picking up the offals they despised, or cheating them of the prizes they had secured; here too was a holysecular, who came to exult over the confusion and destruction of all barbarians who should see nothing diviner in the crucifix than in their own idols. The greater number, however, was composed of debauched and decayed planters of the islands, who ceased to lament their narrow acres and decreasing bondmen, snatched away by the good fortune of some fellow-profligate, when they thought of territories for an estate, and whole tribes for a household. Indeed, in all the group, however elevated and ennobled, for the moment, by the excitement of the scene, and by the resolute impatience they displayed to rush upon adventures well known to be full of suffering and peril, there was but one whom a truly noble-hearted gentleman would have chosen to regard with respect, or to approach with friendship.

This was a young cavalier, who, in propriety of habiliments, in excellence of person, and in nobleness of carriage, differed greatly from all: and, to say the truth, he himself seemed highly conscious of the difference, since he regarded all his fellow-voyagers, saving only his own particular and armed attendants, with the disdain befitting so distinguished a personage. His frame, tall and moderately athletic, was arrayed in hose and doublet of a dusky brown cloth, slashed with purple: his cap and cloak were of black velvet, and in the band of one, and on the shoulder of the other, were symbols of his faith and his profession,—the first being a plain crucifix of silver, and the second a cross of white cloth of eight points, inserted in the mantle. In addition to these badges of devotion, he wore a cross of gold, pointed like the former, and suspended to his neck by a chain of such length and massiveness, as to imbue his companions with high notions of his rank and affluence.

The only point in which he exhibited any feeling *in common* with his companions, was in admiration

of the noble prospect that stretched before him, and which was every moment disclosing itself with newer and greater beauty, as the wind wafted his little vessel nearer to it. His cheek flushed, his eye kindled, and smiting his hands together, in his ardour, he dropped so much of his dignity as to address many of his exclamations to the obsequious but not ungentle master.

"By St. John! señor Capitan," he cried, with rapture, "this is a most noble land to be wasted upon savages!"

"True, señor Don Amador," replied the thrice-honoured master; "a noble land, a rich land, a most glorious land; and, I warrant me, man has never before looked on its equal."

"For my part," said the youth, proudly, "I have seen some lands, that, in the estimation of those who know better, may be pronounced divine; among which I may mention the Greek islands, the keys of the Nile, the banks of the Hellespont, and the hills of Palestine,—not to speak of Italy, and many divisions of our own country: yet, to be honest, I must allow I have never yet looked upon a land, which, at the first sight, impressed me with such strange ideas of magnificence."

"What then will be your admiration, noble cavalier," said the captain, "when you have passed this sandy shore, and yonder rugged hills, and find yourself among the golden valleys they encompass! for all those who have returned from the interior, thus speak of them, and declare upon the gospels and their honour, no man can conceive properly of paradise, until he has looked upon the valleys of Mexico."

"I long to be among them," said the youth; "and the sooner I am mounted on my good steed, Fogoso, (whom God restore to his legs and his spirit, for this cursed ship has cramped both;) I say, the sooner I am mounted upon my good horse, and scattering this heathen sand from under his hoofs, the better will it be for myself, as well as for him. Hark'ee, good

captain: I know not by what sort of miracle I shall surmount yonder tall and majestic pinnacles; but it will be some consolation, while stumbling among them, to be able at least to pronounce their names. What call you yon mountain to the north, with the huge, coffer-like crag on its summit?"

"Your favour has even hit the name, in finding a similitude for the crag," said the captain. "The Indians call it by a name, which signifies the Square Mountain; but poor mariners like myself, who can scarce pronounce their prayers, much less the uncouth and horrible articulations of these barbarians, are content to call it the Coffer Mountain. It lies hard by the route to the great city; and is said to be such a desolate, fire-blasted spot as will sicken a man with horror."

"And yon kingly monster," continued the cavalier, "that raises his snowy cone up to heaven, and mixes his smoke with the morning clouds,—that proudest of all,—what call you him?"

"Spaniards have named him Orizaba," said the master; "but these godless Pagans, who cover every human object with some diabolical superstition, call that peak the Starry Mountain; because the light of his conflagration, seen afar by night, shines like to a planet, and is thought by them to be one of their gods, descending to keep watch over their empire."

"A most heathenish and damning belief!" said the youth, with a devout indignation; "and I do not marvel that heaven has given over to bondage and destruction a race stained with such beastly idolatry. But nevertheless, señor Capitan, and notwithstanding that it is befouled with such impious heresies, I must say, that I have looked upon Mount Olympus, a mountain in Greece, whereon, they say, dwelt the accursed old heathen gods, (whom heaven confound!) before the time that our blessed Saviour hurled them into the Pit; and yet that mountain Olympus is but a hang-dog Turk's head with a turban, compared to this most royal Orizaba, that raiseth up his front like

an old patriarch, and smokes with the glory of his Maker."

"And yet they say," continued the captain, "that there is a mountain of fire even taller and nobler than this, and that hard by the great city. But your worship will see this for yourself, with many other wonders, when your worship fights the savages in the interior."

"If it please Heaven," said the cavalier, "I will see this mountain, and those other wonders, whereof you speak; but as to fighting the savages, I must give you to know, that I cannot perceive how a man who has used his sword upon raging Mussulmans, with a sultan at their head, can condescend to draw it upon poor trembling barbarians, who fight with flints and fish-bones, and run away, a thousand of them together, from six not over-valiant Christians."

"Your favour," said the captain, "has heard of the miserable poltroonery of the island Indians, who, truth to say, are neither Turks nor Moors of Barbary: but, señor Don Amador de Leste, you will find these dogs of Mexico to be another sort of people, who live in stone cities instead of bowers of palm-leaves; have crowned emperors, in place of feathered caciques; are marshalled into armies, with drums, banners, and generals, like Christian warriors; and, finally, go into battle with a most resolute and commendable good will. They will pierce a cuirass with their copper lances, crush an iron helmet with their hardened war-clubs, and,—as has twice or thrice happened with the men of Hernan Cortez,—they will, with their battle-axes of flint, smite through the neck of a horse, as one would pierce a yam with his dagger. Truly, señor caballero, these Mexicans are a warlike people."

"What you tell me," said Don Amador, "I have heard in the islands; as well as that these same mountain Indians roast their prisoners with pepper and green maize, and think the dish both savoury and wholesome; all which matters, excepting only

the last, which is reasonable enough of such children of the devil, I do most firmly disbelieve: for how were they not cowardly caitiffs, could this rebellious cavalier, the valiant Hernan Cortes, with his six hundred soldiers, have forced his way even to the great city Tenochtitlan, and into the palace of the emperor? By my faith," and here the señor Don Amador twisted his finger into his right mustachio with exceeding great complacency, "these same Mexicans may be brave enemies to the cavaliers of the plantations, who have studied the art of war among the tribes of Santo Domingo and Cuba; but to a soldier who, as I said before, has fought the Turks, and that too at the siege of Rhodes, they must be even such chicken-hearted slaves as it would be shame and disgrace to draw sword upon."

The master of the caravel regarded Don Amador with admiration for a moment, and then said, with much emphasis, "May I die the death of a mule, if I am not of your way of thinking, most noble Don Amador. To tell you the truth, these scurvy Mexicans, of whose ferocity and courage so much is said by those most interested to have them thought so, are even just such poor, spiritless, contemptible creatures as the Arrowauks of the isles, only that there are more of them; and so be honest, I know nothing that should tempt a soldier and hidalgo to make war on them, except their gold, of which the worst that can be said is, first, that there is not much of it, and secondly, that there are too many hands to share it. There is neither honour nor wealth to be had in Tenochtitlan. But if a true soldier and a right noble gentleman, as the world esteems Don Amador de Leste, should seek a path worthy of himself, he has but to say the word, and there is one to be found from which he may return with more gold than has yet been gathered by any fortunate adventurer, and more renown than has been won by any other man in the new world: ay, by St. James, and diadems may be found there! provided one have the heart to contest

for them with men who fight like the wolves of Catalonia, and die with their brows to the battle!"

"Now by St. John of Jerusalem!" said Amador, kindling with enthusiasm, "that is a path which, as I am a true Christian and Castilian, I should be rejoiced to tread. For the gold of which you speak, it might come if it would, for gold is a good thing, even to one who is neither needy nor covetous; but I should be an idle hand to gather it. As for the diamonds, I have my doubts whether a man, not born by the grace of God to inherit them, has any right to wear them, unless, indeed, he should marry a king's daughter: but here the kings are all infidels, and, I vow to Heaven, I would sooner burn at a stake, along with a Christian beggar, than sell my soul to perdition in the arms of any infidel princess whatever. But for the renown of subduing a nation of such valiant Pagans as those you speak of, and of converting them to the true faith! *that* is even such a thought as makes my blood tingle within me; and were I, in all particulars, the master of my own actions, I should say to you, Right worthy and courageous captain, (for truly from those honourable scars on your front and temple, and from your way of thinking, I esteem you such a man,) point me out that path, and, with the blessing of Heaven, I will see to what honour it may lead me."

"Your favour," said the captain, "has heard of the great island, Florida, and of the renowned señor Don Ponce de Leon, its discoverer?"

"I have heard of such names, both of isle and of man, I think, said Don Amador, "but, to say truth, señor comandante, you have here, in this new world, such a multitude of wonderful territories, and of heroic men, that, were I to give a month's labour to the study, I think I should not master the names of all of them. Truly, in Rhodes, where the poor knights of the Hospital stood at bay before Solymán el Magnífico, and did such deeds as the world had not heard of since the days of Alexander and his brave knights

of Sparta,—I say, even in Rhodes, where all men thought of their honour and religion, and never a moment of their blood, we heard not of so many heroes as have risen up here in this corner of the earth, in a few years' chasing of the wild Indians."

"The ~~señor~~ Ponce de Leon," said the captain, without regarding the sneer of the proud soldier, "the señor Ponce de Leon, Adelantado of Bimini and of Florida, in search of the miraculous Fountain of Youth, which, the Indians say, lies somewhere to the north, landed eight years ago, with the crews of three ships, all of them bigger and better than this little rotten Sangre de Cristo, whereof I myself commanded one. Of the extraordinary beauty and fertility of the land of Florida, thus discovered, I will say nothing. Your favour will delight more to hear me speak of its inhabitants. These were men of a noble stature, and full of such resolution, that we were no sooner ashore, than they fell upon us; and I must say, we found we were now at variance with a people in no wise resembling those naked idiots of Cuba, or these cowardly hinds of Mexico. They cared not a jot for swordsman, arcubalister, or musketeer. To our rapiers they opposed their stone battle-axes, which gushed through the brain more like a thunderbolt than a Christian espada; no crossbowman could drive an arrow with more mortal aim and fury than could these wild archers with their horn bows, (for know, señor, they have, in that country of Florida, some prodigious animal, which yields them abundant material for their weapons;) and, what filled us with much surprise, and no little fear, instead of betaking themselves to their heels at the sound of our firelocks, as we looked for them to do, no sooner had they heard the roar of these arms, than they fetched many most loud and frightful yells, to express their contempt of our warlike din, and rushed upon us with such renewed and increasing violence, that, to be honest, as a Christian of ~~my~~ years should be, we *were fain* to betake ourselves to our ships with what

speed and good fortune we could. And now, señor, you will be ashamed to hear that our courage was so much mollified by this repulse, and our fears of engaging further with such desperadoes so urgent and potent, that we straightway set sail, and, in the vain search for the enchanted Fountain, quite forgot the nobler objects of the voyage."

"What you have said," quoth Don Amador, "convinces me that these savages of Florida are a warlike people, and worthy the wrath of a brave soldier; but you have said nothing of the ores and diadems, whereof, I think, you first spake, and which, heaven save the mark! by some strange mutation of mind, have made a deeper impression on my imagination than such trifles should."

"We learned of some wounded captives we carried to the ships," continued the master, "as well, at least, as we could understand by their signs, that there was a vast country to the north-west, where dwelt nations of fire-worshippers, governed by kings, very rich and powerful, on the banks of a great river; and from some things we gathered, it was thought by many that the miraculous Fountain was in that land, and not in the island Bimini; and this think I myself, for, señor, I have seen a man who, with others, had slaked his thirst in every spring that gushes from that island, and, by my faith, he died of an apoplexy the day after his arrival in the Habana. Wherefore, it is clear, that marvellous Fountain must be in the country of the fire-worshippers. But notwithstanding all these things, señor, our commander Don Ponce, would resolve upon naught but to return to the Bahamas, where our ships were divided, each in search of the island called Bimini. It was my fortune to be despatched westward; and here, what with the aid of a tempest that blew from the east, and some little hankering of mine own appetites after that land of the fire-worshippers, I found myself many a league beyond where any Christian had ever navigated before, where a fresh and turbid current

rolled through the deep, bearing the trunks of countless great trees, many of them scorched with fire: whereupon I knew that I was near to the object of my desires, which, however, the fears and the discontent of my crew prevented my reaching. I was even compelled to obey them, and conduct them to Cuba."

"Señor Capitan," said Amador, who had listened to the master's narrative with great attention, "I give you praise for your bold and most commendable daring in having sailed so far, and I condole with you for your misfortune in being compelled to abide the government of a crew of such runagate and false companions, whom I marvel exceedingly you did not hang, every man of 'em, to some convenient corner of your ship, as was the due of such disloyal knaves; but yet, credit me, I see not what this turbid and fresh flood, and what these floating trees, had to do with the gold and the diadems, of which you were speaking."

"Señor," said the Captain earnestly, "I have navigated the deep for, perhaps, more years than your favour has lived; and it was my fortune to be with the Admiral——"

"With Colon!" cried the youth.

"With his excellency, the admiral, Don Cristobal Colon, the discoverer of this new world!" replied the master proudly, "in his own good ship, when we sailed into the Serpent's Mouth, which, we knew not then, laved the shores of the great Continent; and I remember that when the admiral had beheld the trees floating in the current, and had tasted of the fresh water of that boiling gulf, he told us that these came from a great river rolling through a mighty continent. And, in after times, the words of the admiral were proved to be just; for there his captain, the young Pinzon, found the great river Oronoko."

"There is no man," said Don Amador, "who more reverences the memory of the admiral than I; and I feel the more regard for yourself, that you have sail-

ed with him on his discoveries. Moreover, I beg your pardon, insomuch as I have been slow to unravel your meaning. But now, I perceive, you think you had reached that river of the infidel fire-worshippers, whom God confound with fire and flame! as doubtless he will. And hath no man again sought the mouth of that river? I marvel you did not yourself make a second attempt."

"I could not prevail upon any cavaliers, rich enough for the undertaking," said the master, "to league with me in it. Men liked not the spirit of the northern savages; and, in truth, there were a thousand other lands where the barbarians could be subdued with less peril, and, as they thought, with a better hope of gain. And yet, by our lady, that river bore with it the evidences of the wealth on its banks; for what were those scorched trees, but the relics of the fires with which the kings of the land were smelting their ores? and what quantity of gold must there not have been where such prodigious furnaces were kindled!"

"By the mass!" said Amador, with ardour, "you speak the truth; it is even a most wonderful land; and if a few thousand pesos would float an expedition, by my faith, I think I could find them."

"A few thousand pesos, and the countenance of such a leader as Don Amador de Leste, a knight of the holy and valiant order of San Juan——"

"A knight by right, but not by vow," said Don Amador, hastily: "I give you to understand, señor Capitan, that I am not a sworn brother of that most ancient, honourable, and knightly order, but an humble volunteer, attached, for certain reasons of my own, to them, and privileged by the consent of his most eminent highness, the Grand Master, to wear these badges, wherein I am arrayed; in acknowledgment that I did some service not unworthy knight-hood in the trenches of Rhodes."

"Your favour will not lead the less worthily for that," said the Captain; "I know an hundred cavaliers

who would throw their ducats, as well as their arms, into the adventure prescribed by the señor Don Amador; and a thousand cross-bows, with three or four score arquebusiers, would flock to the standard as soon as we had preached through the islands a crusade to the fire-worshippers, and a pilgrimage to the Waters of Life."

"And is it truly believed," said Amador, eagerly, "that such waters are to be found in these heathen lands?"

"Who can doubt it?" said the Captain; "the Indians of the Bahamas have spoken of them for years; no Spaniard hath ever thought of questioning their existence; and at this moment, so great is the certainty of finding them, that my old leader, Don Ponce, is collecting round him men for a second expedition, with which he will depart I know not how soon. But I know Don Ponce; the draught of youth is not for him; he will seek the fountain on his great island of Florida, and find it not: it will bubble only to the lips of those who seek it near the great river of the great continent."

"By heaven!" said Don Amador, "what might not a man do, who could drink of this miraculous fountain! A draught of it would have carried the great Alejandro so far into the East, as to have left but small work for the knaves of Portugal. And then our friends! Dios mio! we could keep our friends by us for ever! But hold, señor Capitan—a thought strikes me: have you ever heard the opinion of a holy clergyman on this subject? Is it lawful for a man to drink of such a fountain?"

"By my faith," replied the master, "I have never heard priest or layman advance an argument against its lawfulness: and I know not how it should be criminal, since Providence hath given us the privilege to drink of any well, whose waters are not to our misliking."

"For my part," said Amador, "I must say, I have my doubts whether Providence hath given us any

such privilege; the exercise of which, in general, would greatly confound the world, by over-peopling it, and, in particular, would seem, in a measure, to put man in a condition to defy his Maker, and to defeat all the ends of divine goodness and justice: for how should a man be punished for his sins, who had in him the power of endless life? and how should a man keep from sinning, who had no fear of death and the devil? and, finally, how should we ever receive any of the benefits of the most holy atonement, after drinking such a life-preserving draught?—for it is my opinion, señor Capitan, no man would wish to go to heaven, who had the power of remaining on earth.”

“By my soul,” said the captain earnestly, “this is a consideration which never occupied me before; and I shall take counsel upon it with the first holy man I meet.”

“At all events,” said the cavalier, “there is inducement enough to make search after this river, were it only to fight the fire-worshippers, convert them to the true faith, and see what may be the curiosities of their land. Yet I must give you warning, it will rest with another whom I am now seeking, whether I may league with you in this enterprise or not. Give me his consent and leading, and I will take leave of these poor rogues of Tenochtitlan, as soon as I have looked a little upon their wonders; and then, with the blessing of God and St. John, have at the valiant fire-worshippers, with all my heart!—But, how now, señor Capitan? What means your pilot to cast anchor here among the fleet, and not carry us forthwith to the shore?”

“I dare not proceed farther,” said the captain, “without the authority of the señor Cavallero, admiral of this squadron, and governor of this harbour of San Juan de Ulua. It is necessary I should report myself to him for examination, on board the *Capitana*, and receive his instructions concerning my cargo and fellow-voyagers.”

“His instructions concerning your fellow-voya-

gers!" said Don Amador, sternly. "I, for one, am a voyager, who will receive no instructions for the government of my actions, neither myself nor by proxy; and, with God's blessing, I will neither ask permission to disembark, nor allow it to be asked for myself, or for my grooms; and the señor Cavallero, or any other señor, that thinks to stop me, had better grind both sides of his sword, by way of preparation for such folly."

"Your favour has no cause for anger," said the master, moderately. "This is the custom and the law, and it becomes the more necessary to enforce it, in the present situation of things. Your favour will receive no check, but rather assistance; and it is only necessary to assure the admiral you do not come as a league and helpmate of the mutineer, Cortes, to receive free license, a safe-conduct, and perhaps, even guides, to go whithersoever you list throughout this empire. This, señor, is only a form of courtesy, such as one cavalier should expect of another, and no more."

"Truly, then, if you assure me so," said Don Amador, complacently, "I will not refuse to go myself in person to his excellency, the admiral; and the more readily that, I fancy, from the name, there is some sort of blood-relationship between his excellency and myself. But, by heaven, I would rather, at present, be coursing Fogoso over yon glittering sand, than winding a bolero on my cousin's deck, though he were a king's admiral."



CHAPTER II.

DON AMADOR DE LESTE was interrupted in the agreeable duty (the last to be performed in the little caravel,) of inquiring into the health and condition of his war-horse, Fogoso, by a summons, or, as it

was more courteously expressed, an invitation, to attend the admiral on board his own vessel. Giving a thousand charges to his attendants, all of which were received with due deference and humility, he stepped into the boat, which, in a few moments, he exchanged for the decks of the Capitana,—not, however, without some doubt as to the degree of loftiness he should assume during the interview with his excellency, the admiral, his kinsman. His pride had already twice, or thrice, since his appearance among the islands of the New World, been incensed by the arrogant assumption of their petty dignitaries to inquire into, and controul, the independence of his movements: and he remembered with high displeasure, that the royal adelantado of Cuba, the renowned Velasquez, a man of whom, as he was pleased to say, he had never heard so much as the name until he found himself within his territories, had not only dared to disregard the privileges of his birth and decorations, but had well-nigh answered his ire and menaces, by giving him to chains and captivity. Nor, when, at last, the pious exertions of the good friars of Santiago had allayed the growing storm, and appeased his own indignation, by urging the necessity their governor was under to examine into the character and objects of all persons, who, by declining to visit the new El Dorado under the authority of the commander, might reasonably be suspected of a desire to join his rebellious lieutenant,—not even then could the proud Amador forget that, whatever might be the excuse, his independence *had* been questioned, and might be again, by any inflated official whom he should be so unlucky as to meet. His doubt, however, in this case, was immediately dispelled by the degree of state and ceremony with which he was received on board the Capitana, and conducted to his excellency; and the last shadow of hesitation departed from his brow, when he beheld the admiral prepared to welcome him with such courtesy and deference as were only accorded to the most noble and favoured.

"If I do not err," said the admiral, with a bow of great reverence, and a smile of prodigious suavity, "I behold, in the señor Don Amador de Leste, a gentleman of Valencia, whom I make free, as I shall be proud, to welcome as my countryman and kinsman?"

"Señor Almirante," replied Amador, with equal amenity, "my mother was a Valencian, and of the house of Cavallero. Wherefore, I take it for granted, we are in some sort related; but in what degree, I am not able to determine: nor do I think that a matter very important to be questioned into, since, in these savage corners of the earth, the farthest degree of consanguinity should draw men together as firmly as the closest."

"You are right, señor cavalier and kinsman," said the admiral: "affinity of any degree should be a claim to the intimacy and affection of brotherhood; and although this is the first time I have enjoyed the felicity to behold my right worthy and much honoured cousin, I welcome him with good will to such hospitalities as my poor bark and this barbarous clime can afford; marvelling, however, amid all my satisfaction, what strange fortune has driven him to exchange the knightly combats of Christendom for the ignoble campaigns of this wild hemisphere."

"As to that, most noble and excellent cousin," said the cavalier, "I will not scruple to inform your excellency, together with all other matters, wherein, as my kinsman, you are entitled to question; previous to which, however, I must demand of your goodness to know how far your interrogatories are to bear the stamp of office and authority, the satisfaction of my mind on which point will materially affect the character of my answers."

"Surely," said the admiral courteously, and seemingly with great frankness, "I will only presume to question you as a friend and relative, and, as such, no farther than it may suit your pleasure to allow. My office I will only use so far as it may enable me to assist you in your objects, if, as I will make bold

to believe, you may need such assistance in this land of Mexico."

"I thank your excellency," said Amador, now receiving and pressing the hand of the commander with much cordiality, "both for your offers of assistance, which, if I may need it, I will freely accept; and for your assurance you do not mean to trouble me with your authority:—a mark of extreme civility and good sense, which virtues, under your favour, I have not found so common among your fellow-commanders in these heathen lands, as I was led to expect."

The admiral smiled pleasantly on his kinsman while replying, "I must beg your allowance for the presumption of my brothers in command, who, sooth to say, have had so much dealing with the wild Indians and rough reprobates of these regions as somewhat to have forgot their manners, when treating with gentlemen and nobles. My superior and governor, the worthy and thrice-honoured Velasquez, (whom God grant many and wiser counsellors!) is rather hot of head and unreasonable of temper; and has, doubtless, thrown some obstructions in the way of your visit to this disturbed land. But you should remember, that the junction of so brave a cavalier as Don Amador de Leste with the mutinous bands of the señor Cortes, is a thing to excite both dread and opposition."

"I remember," said Amador, "that some such excuse was made for him, and that my assurance that my business had no more to do with that valiant rebel than with his own crabbed excellency, was no more believed than the assertion of any common hind: a piece of incredulity I shall take great pleasure, at some more convenient period, of removing, at my sword's point, from his excellency's body."

"I am grieved you should have cause to complain of the governor," said the señor Cavallero; "and verily I myself cannot pretend to justify his rash and tyrannical opposition, especially in the matter of yourself; who, I take it for granted, come hither as the

kinsman of the knight Calavar, to search out and remove that crack-brained cavalier from these scenes of tumult and danger."

"The knight Calavar," said the young soldier sternly, "like other men, has his eccentricities and follies; but if God has smitten him with a sorer infirmity than others, he has left him so much strength of arm and resoluteness of heart, and withal has given him friends of so unhesitating a devotion, that it will always be wise to pronounce his name with the respect which his great worth and valiant deeds have proved to be his due."

"Surely," said the admiral, good-humouredly, "it is my boast that I can claim, through yourself, to be distantly related to this most renowned and unhappy gentleman; and, while I would sharply rebuke a stranger for mentioning him with discourtesy, I held myself at liberty to speak of him with freedom to yourself."

"I beg your pardon then," said Amador, "if I took offence at your utterance of a word, which seemed to me to savour more of the heartless ridicule with which the world is disposed to remark a mental calamity, than the respectful pity which, it is my opinion, in such cases should be always accorded. Your excellency did right to suppose my business in this hemisphere was to seek out the knight Calavar; not, however, as you have hinted, to remove him from among the savages, (for I give you to understand, he is ever capable of being the guide and director of his own actions;) but to render him the dutiful service of his kinsman and esquire, and to submit myself to his will and government, whether it be to fight these rogues of Mexico, or any other heathens whatever."

"I give you praise for your fidelity and affection," said the señor Cavallero, "which, I think, will stand the knight in good stead, if it be his pleasure to remain longer in this wild country. But tell me, Don Amador:—as a Cavallero of Valencia, I could not be ignorant of the misfortune of our very renowned

cousin; yet was I never able to compass the cause of his melancholy. I remember that when he fleshed his boyish sword for the first time among the Moors of the Alpujarras, he was accounted not only of valour, but of discretion, far beyond his years. There was no patrimony in all Granada so rich and enviable as the lordship of Calavar; no nobleman of Spain was thought to have fairer and loftier prospects than the young Don Gines Gabriel de Calavar; none had greater reason to laugh and be merry, for before the beard had darkened on his lip, he had enjoyed the reputation of a brave soldier; yet, no sooner came he to man's estate, than, utterly disregarding the interests of his house and the common impulses of youth, he flung himself into the arms of the knights of Rhodes, vowed himself to toil and sorrow, and has, ever since, been remembered by those who knew him in his boyhood, as the saddest and maddest of men."

"So much I have heard, and so much I know, of the good knight," said Amador, with a sigh; "little more can I add to the story, but that some calamity, the nature of which I never dared to inquire, suddenly wrought this change in him, even in the midst of his youth, and led him to devote his life to the cause of the faithful."

"Thou hast heard it suggested," said Cavallero, significantly, "that, in the matter of the Alpujarras, his heart was hotter, and his hand redder than became a Christian knight, even when striking on the hearth of the Infidel?"

"Señor cousin and admiral," said Amador decidedly, "in my soul, I believe you are uttering these suggestions only from a kinsman's concern for the honour and welfare of the party in question; and therefore do I make bold to tell you, the man who, in my hearing, asperses the knight Calavar, charging his grief of mind to be the fruit of any criminal or dishonourable deed, shall abide the issue of the slander as ruefully as if it had been cast on the ashes of my mother!"

"So shall he win his deservings," said the commander. "Nevertheless doth Calavar himself give some cause for these foolish surmises, of which indiscreet persons have occasionally delivered themselves; for the evident misery of heart and distraction of head, the austere and penitential self-denial of his life, nay, the very ostentation of grief and contrition, which is written in his deportment and blazoned on his armour, and which has gained him, in these lands, the appellation of the Penitent Knight, seem almost to warrant the suspicion of an unquiet and remorseful conscience, brooding over the memory of an unabsolved crime. But I say this not so much to justify, as, in part, to excuse those idle impertinents, who are so free with their innuendoes. I have ever pondered with wonder on the secret of the brave knight's unrest; yet, I must confess to thee, I was struck with no less astonishment, when, returning from Nombre de Dios to Santiago, I heard that a famous Knight Hospitaller, and he no other than Don Gines Gabriel de Calavar, had arrived among the islands, frenzied with the opportunity of slaying pagans at his pleasure, and had already followed on the path of Cortes to Mexico. It gave me great pain, and caused me no little marvel, to find he had come and vanished with so little of the retinue of his rank, and of the attendance necessary to one in his condition, that two or three ignorant grooms were his only attendants."

"I have no doubt," said Amador, "I can allay your wonder as to these matters. Your excellency need not be told that the banner of the Turk now floats over the broken ramparts of Rhodes, and over the corse of those noble knights of San Juan, who defended them for more than two hundred years, and at last perished among their ruins. This is a catastrophe that has pealed over all Christendom like the roar of a funeral bell, and its sound has even pierced to these lands of twilight. No knight among all that *band of warriors and martyrs*, as I am myself a wit-

ness, did more brave and heroical actions throughout the black and bloody siege, than my lord and kinsman, Calavar. But the good and ever-gracious Saint, the patron of this most ancient and chivalric brotherhood, saved him, with a few other knights, out of the jaws of destruction, and restored him again to his own country. Rhodes was fallen; there was no longer a home for the destitute knights; they wandered over Europe, whithersoever their destinies listed, but particularly wheresoever there was an infidel to be slain. Our monarch of Spain contemplated a crusade among the Moors of Barbary, the descendants of that accursed—(why should I not say wretched? for they are exiles;)—that wretched race who had once o’ermastered our own beloved land; the knight Calavar entered into this project with alacrity, and set himself to such preparations as should win him good vengeance for the blood of his brothers lost at Rhodes. I did myself, in obedience to his will, betake me to the business of seeing what honest Christians might be prevailed on to fight under his banner; and while thus engaged, at a distance from my beloved lord, with, perhaps, as I should confess with shame, less energy and more sloth than were becoming in his follower, I suffered certain worldly allurements to step between me and my duty, and, for a time, almost forgot my renowned and unhappy kinsman. Now, señor,” continued the youth, with some little hesitation, and a deep sigh, “it is not necessary I should trouble you with any very particular account of my forgetfulness and stupidity: it was soon known that the enthusiasm of our king was somewhat abated touching the matter of the African crusade,—perhaps swallowed up in the interest wherewith he regarded the new world which God and the great Colon had given him; the enthusiasm of his subjects diminished in like manner: there was no more talk of Africa. This, señor, may perhaps in a measure excuse my own lethargy; but you may be assured I awoke out of it with shame and mortification, when I discover-

ed that the good knight, left to himself, and deprived of that excitement of combat, or the hope of combat, so necessary to the well-being of his mind, had suddenly (doubtless, in one of those paroxysms of eccentricity,—or delirium, as I may call it to you,) departed from the land, and was now cleaving the surges that divided us from the new hemisphere. There was nothing left for me but to follow him in the first ship that sailed on the same adventure. This I have done: I have tracked my leader from Palos to Cuba; from Cuba to this barren coast; and now, with your good leave and aidance, I will take the last step of the pursuit, and render myself up to his authority in the barbaric city, Tenochtitlan."

"I respect your motive, and praise your devotion, most worthy cousin," said the admiral with much kindness; "and yet you must forgive me, if I dare to express to you some degree of pity. My long acquaintance with these countries, both of isle and main, has well instructed me what you have to expect among them; and I can truly conceive what sacrifices you have made for the good knight's sake. In any case, I beg leave to apprise you, you can command all my services, either to persist in seeking him, or to return to Spain. My advice is, that you leave this place forthwith, in a ship which I am to-morrow to despatch to Andalusia; return to your native land; betake yourself to those allurements, and that lethargy, which I can well believe may bring you happiness; commend yourself to your honourable lady-love, and think no more of the wild Calavar. Here, if you lose not life, before you have looked on your kinsman, as there is much fear, you must resolve to pass your days in such suffering and misery, and withal in ignoble warfare with naked savages, supported by such mean and desperate companions, as, I am sure, you were never born to."

"What you counsel me," said Amador coolly, "is doubtless both wisdom and friendship; nevertheless, *if your excellency will be good enough to reconsider*

your advice, you will perceive it involves such selfishness, meanness, and dishonour, as cannot be listened to with any propriety by a kinsman of the knight of Calavar. I do not say I come hither to condescend to this ignoble warfare,—though if it be worthy my good knight, I shall have no reason to scorn it. I bear with me, to my kinsman, the despatch of his most eminent highness, the Grand Master of the most illustrious order of San Juan, wherein, although it be recommended to him, if such warfare seem to him honourable and advantageous to the cause of Christ, to strike fast and well, it is, if such strife be otherwise, strongly urged on him to return without delay to Europe, and to the Isle of Malta; which, it is announced, our monarch of Spain will speedily give to the good knights. It is therefore,” continued the cavalier, “from the nature of things and of mine own will, clearly impossible I should follow your advice; in default of which, I must beg such other counsel and assistance of your excellency as your excellency may think needful to bestow; only premising, that as I have many a weary league of sand and mountain to compass, the sooner you benefit me with these good things the better.”

“Your journey will be neither so long nor so wearisome as you imagine,” said Cavallero: “but, I fear me, will present more obstructions than you may be prepared to encounter. I take it for granted, the governor Velasquez has furnished you with no commands to his general Don Panfilo de Narvaez, since he gave you none to myself.”

“This is even the fact,” said Amador; “I entered the caravel which brought me here, as I thought, in defiance of his authority, and not without apprehensions of being obliged to cut off the ears of some dozen or two of his rogues, who might be ordered to detain me. Nevertheless, I left the island without a contest, and equally without aidance of any kind from this discourteous ruler.”

“I must give thee some counsel, then,” said the

admiral, "for I apprehend the governor did, very perfidiously as I esteem it, when he ceased his opposition, rest much hope on that of his general. Thou art acquainted with the character of Narvaez?"

"By my faith, I am so ignorant of all matters appertaining to these climates, that, saving thine own, and the knight Calavar's, and one or two others which I acquired this morning, I am familiar only with those of two other persons,—to wit,—of Velasquez, whom I consider a very scurvy and ill-bred personage, and of Cortes, a man whom I hold in much esteem, ever since I heard he burned his fleet to keep his followers from running away, and made prisoner of the great Mexican emperor in his own capital. In addition to this, I know the aforesaid governor doth very hotly hate, and hath disgraced with the titles of rebel and outlaw, this same respectable and courageous Cortes; but for what reason, as I have been kept in somewhat too great a passion to inquire, I am yet altogether ignorant."

"For one who may soon share an important part in the events of this region, I think thou showest a most princely indifference to them," said the admiral, smiling. "I will not say the safety, but the facility, with which thou mayest traverse these lands, will be greatly increased by knowing some little of their history; and that knowledge I will hasten to impart to thee, and with what brevity I can. If I should be led to speak with more freedom of certain persons than may seem fitting in an inferior and a colleague, I must beseech thee to remember I am doing so to a kinsman, and for his especial information and good. Know then, señor Don Amador, the person whom it pleased our viceroy, the son of Colón, to set over us, and whom it has since pleased his most devout majesty, the emperor, to confirm in the government of Cuba, and even to that to add the further dignity of ruler of the kings of México, is, as I hinted to thee *before*, afflicted with so irascible a temper and so

jealous a fancy, that, were I not restrained by the office I hold under him, I should say he was, at the least, as mad as any other man in his dominion. The desire of immortalizing himself by some great exploit would be commendable in him, were it not accompanied by the ambition to achieve it by the hands of another. Ever since the discovery of this fair empire of Montezuma by the señor Cordova, he has thirsted for the glory of subduing it; and has taken all the steps necessary to such a purpose, except the single one of attempting it in person;—an omission not in itself important, since there are an hundred other cavaliers more capable of the task, only that, besides the other munitions with which he furnishes his lieutenant, he follows him ever with so plentiful a store of distrust, that it is utterly impossible his officer should have a chance to immortalize him. After much seeking of a man whose ambition should extend no further than to the glory of winning a crown for the purpose of seeing his excellency wear it, he fixed upon the worthy hidalgo, Hernan Cortes, a gentleman of Medellin in Estremadura, and despatched him on the business of conquest. Now, no sooner was his general gone, than this jealous imagination, whereof I spake, instantly presented to his mind the image of Cortes as a conqueror, suddenly laying claim, before the emperor and the world, to the sole merit of the conquest; a spectacle so infinitely intolerable, that without delay he set himself at work to hinder Cortes from making any conquest at all.”

“Surely,” said Amador, “this governor Velasquez is a fool, as well as a knave!”

“Heaven have him in keeping! You should mention him with respect: but as you are speaking in the confidence of blood-relationship, I cannot take notice of your sarcasm,” said the admiral. “The señor Cortes, however,” continued Cavallero, “was by no means disposed to second the disloyal frenzy of the governor: (disloyal I call it, since it threatened to deprive his majesty, the emperor Charles, of the oppor-

tunity of adding a new empire to his diadem.) On the other hand, Cortes was fully determined to do his duty, and thought the governor could do nothing better than to follow his example. But in the end, this same Cortes, though of as meek a temper as is desirable in the commander of an army, became greatly incensed at the sottish and grievous distrust of his governor; and calling his army together, and representing to them the foolish predicament in which his excellency had placed them, he threw down his truncheon with contempt, and told them that as Velasquez had left them without a leader, the wisest thing that remained for them was to find another as soon as possible: as for himself, he disdained to hold his commission longer under such a commander."

"By heaven, a most proper-spirited and gallant gentleman!" cried Amador. "I honour him for the act, but chiefly for the contempt it argued of this jackfeather ruler."

"I must beg of your favour," said the admiral, gravely, "to remember that his excellency is my chief and commander; though, in justice, I think you have some reason to censure him.—What remained for the army of Cortes, now no longer having a general? They were loath to leave the fair empire that appeared almost in their grasp, and enraged at the governor, who seemed determined to rob them of it. There was only one way to secure the conquest for their royal master: they absolved themselves of their allegiance to the governor, swore themselves the soldiers and subjects of the emperor alone, and erecting themselves into a colony, forthwith elected Cortes their governor and commander-in-chief; and despatched advice of the same to Don Carlos, with a petition for permission to pursue and conclude the conquest of Tenochtitlan in his name."

"A very loyal, defensible, and, indeed, praiseworthy action," said Don Amador, with emphasis; "and I marvel your jealous governor did not stab himself

forthwith, out of pure chagrin, to be so sharply and justly outwitted."

"Instead of that," said the admiral, "boiling with vexation and rage, and devoting Cortes to the fiend who had first suggested him as a proper lieutenant, his excellency equipped a second army, more than twice as strong as that he had ordered Cortes to raise; and this, one would have thought, he would have commanded in person. But the old whim of conquering by lieutenants, and becoming famous by proxy, still beset the brain of his wisdom. He gave the command of an army of more than a thousand men to the señor Panfilo de Narvaez, a Biscayan, of whom the best I can say is, that he swore eternal fidelity to Velasquez,—resolving privately in his own mind that, as soon as he had subdued Cortes, he would follow his example, and throw off the authority of his distrustful commander."

"I should call this treachery," said Amador, "but that I think the absurdity of the chief a full excuse for the defection of the follower."

"The wisdom of the proceeding is now made manifest," continued the admiral. "It is scarce a month since it was my misfortune, as commander of the naval division of this expedition, to land the forces of Narvaez on this shore. Here I learned with much admiration, that Cortes, notwithstanding the meagerness of his army, had, absolutely, after certain bloody combats with savages on the wayside, marched into the great city, taken possession of the body of the barbarous emperor, and, through him, virtually, of all the lands which acknowledged his sway; and you may understand how much, as a true and reasonable subject of our Catholic monarch, I was afflicted to learn, in addition, that the sending of the new force by Velasquez, only served the purpose of snatching the conquest out of our hands. For Cortes, under a delusion which may be pardoned him, on account of its loyalty, regarding himself, in obedience to the command of his followers, as the only true representa-

tative and general of our king, and ourselves, by consequence, as traitors and rebels to his majesty, did forthwith resolve to drive us from the land; to do which, it was needful he should withdraw his forces from Tenochtitlan; and therefore, Tenochtitlan is lost."

"Thou sayest, the señor Cortes hath an army not half so powerful as the Biscayan's?"

"Nay, 'tis much short of five hundred men, and weakened by a year's campaign, and still further diminished by the necessity of maintaining a garrison in his port of Vera Cruz, which he doth humorously denominate the Rich City, and leaving another of more than a hundred men, with one of his best captains, in the goodly city, out of a hope, which I myself reckon both vain and foolish, still to retain possession of it."

"And with this shattered and pitiful handful, which I think cannot exceed three hundred men," said Amador, "the brave Cortes is resolute to resist the Biscayan, and his thousand fresh combatants?"

"It is even so," replied Cavallero.

"I give him the praise of a most dauntless and heroic leader," cried Amador; "and I am eager to proffer him the hand of friendship."

"Not only resolute to resist," said the admiral, "but, from the most undeniable tokens, impatient to attack; as, indeed, are all his people. As an evidence of which, I may tell thee, that Narvaez having quartered his host at an Indian city called Zempoala, within a few leagues of this aforesaid stockade and Rich City of the True Cross, he straightway despatched certain officers, military, civil, and religious, to demand the surrender of the same at the hands of the very young and very simple-minded señor, Don Gonzalo de Sandoval, its commandante. What answer, thinkest thou, was made by this foolish captain, so many leagues separated from his commander, and so far from all assistance? Faith, he flings me the envoys into certain bags of network, as one would

live quails, and tossing them upon the backs of lusty savages, in lieu of asses, despatched them forthwith over the mountains to his general. And this is the only answer my colleague and most excellent friend, the general Narvaez, ever received to his summons for the surrender of the Rich City of the True Cross."

"A spirited and ever-to-be-commended youth, this same bold Sandoval," said Amador earnestly; "and, I begin to bethink me, I shall not be loath to remain for a time in the company of a leader, who hath such worthy spirits for his companions. But tell me, señor cavalier and cousin, hath Cortes yet struck a blow for his honour and his right?"

"By our Lady, no," said the admiral: "and yet, upon reflection," continued he, "I must confess, that though he has not yet drawn a Christian sabre on the Biscayan, he has done him much hurt with a certain weapon of gold, the use of which he learned at Mexico, and whose blows, by the operation of a kind of magic, have the virtue to paralyze the wrath, without spilling the blood, of an adversary."

"This is a weapon of the devil!" said the young cavalier indignantly, "which I marvel much should be used by so worthy a soldier. Nevertheless, as it does not shed blood, the use of it may be justifiable in a contest between brothers and countrymen; wherein humanity and mercy are always more Christian qualities than the rage and bloodthirstiness of another warfare. But notwithstanding all this, if such enchanted arms (if such indeed exist, as I cannot believe,) be in vogue among the followers of Cortes, I swear to God and Saint John, I will eschew them as I would the gifts of the fiend; and, if compelled by the command of my good knight, to fight in their company, it shall be with such sword and spear as I can use with a free conscience, and an honest arm."

"I commend your honourable resolution," said the admiral, amused with the literal straightforwardness of his kinsman, but without thinking fit to undeceive

him; "but how long the cavalier Cortes will employ so bloodless a rapier, is more than I can determine. He now lies within a few leagues of my colleague, the Biscayan; and although apparently more ripe for negotiation than combat, I shall be much mistaken if he do not, at some convenient season, so fling his crew of desperadoes at the head of Narvaez, as shall make his excellency stare. Indeed there is now little hope of pacification; for Narvaez has very grievously insulted Cortes, by proclaiming him a rebel and an outlaw, and setting a price on his head; and such is his hotheadedness, that, it was but yesterday, he compelled me to ship to Cuba the king's *oidor*, Vasques, whom he had arrested for daring to speak to him of amicable treaty. I look daily for intelligence of a battle."

"I vow to heaven!" said Amador, his eyes sparkling with animation, "I vow to heaven! I have no desire to mingle in a civil fray of any kind; but if these mad fellows must be e'en at it, I see no reason why I should not stand hard by, to be a witness of their bravery. Wherefore most excellent cousin, I must entreat of your favour to despatch me without delay, with such guides, or instructions, as will enable me to reach the Señor Cortes before the combat begins."

"If it would suit thee as well to survey this spectacle from the camp of Narvaez," said Cavallero, "I could gratify thee without any difficulty. But I must apprise thee, that to reach Cortes, it will be necessary to pass the lines of Narvaez; and what obstructions he may choose to throw in thy way is more than I can very satisfactorily determine, though I may counsel thee how best to overcome them."

"Please heaven," said Amador proudly, "he shall make me no opposition which he shall not answer to the cost of his body. For I am here, a free hidalgo of Spain, knowing no authority but the king's will and mine own; a neophyte (and, as I may add, a knight by right, though unsworn,) of the illustrious

order of San Juan, bearing the instructions of his most eminent highness, the Grand Master, to a vowed knight, and therefore liable to the command of no other man, save only, as before excepted, the king; and he who thinks to hinder me in my passage, besides provoking the wrath of the aforesaid privileged order, must, as I said before, do it under the peril of mine own sword."

"It would not become me to question your privileges, or the danger with which they might be invaded," said the admiral, "nor will I repeat to you in how little regard these matters may be had by a man who has presumed to arrest and imprison the representative of his majesty himself, and who, surrounded by an army, and separated from the sway of the laws, is beyond the present responsibility of any government but that of his own conscience. I can only remind you that, as an emissary of the holy order, you are doubly bound to avoid a quarrel with a Christian and countryman; especially when, as will presently be your case, you are in the lands of the infidel. I must beg to remind you, too, that the Biscayan, holding, as he believes, the authority of the king, and compelled to act as may seem to him necessary for the preservation of the king's interest, should be respected accordingly; and his humours, as well as his rightful commands, borne without anger or opposition."

"May his majesty live a thousand years!" said the cavalier. "It is no part of my principle to oppose his pleasure; wherefore, if contesting the authority of this Biscayan general be such disloyalty, I will refrain from it; that is, as long as I can. But nevertheless, I will protest against any authority that may hinder my present journey."

"Moderation, and the exercise of patience," said Cavallero, "will doubtless secure you from restraint and insult. It is quite necessary you report the object of your travel to the commander Narvaez; and even to desire his permission (a courtesy that

has in it nothing of degradation) to continue your journey."

"Doubtless," said Amador, sarcastically, "you will tell me, as did the señor Gomez, the captain of the caravel, that this submission of myself to his commands will be nothing more than the rendering of a customary compliment to his dignity. If there be any way by which I may pass by the camp of Narvaez, I shall be much bound to your excellency to inform me of it; and I will pursue it, be it ever so rough and long, with much more satisfaction than I can ever make my entreaties to him."

"There is no other way," said the admiral. "The Indian city, Zempoala, where Narvaez has established his head-quarters, lies immediately on the path to the Villa Rica; and the scouts of Narvaez, occupying all the intermediate ground, render it impossible you should pass him without observation, or them without their leader's commands. I am now about to despatch to Narvaez certain reinforcements, in whose company I recommend you to travel, and with whom I will send such representations to the general as, I think, will secure you his instant permission and, doubtless, aid, to join your kinsman, the good knight, without delay. Only let me entreat of you, as your true friend and relation, not wantonly, by any overbearing pride, to exasperate the peevish temper of my colleague."

"I will take your advice," said the cavalier, complacently, "and treat the Biscayan with as much respect as he may seem to deserve. Only, as it may be a long day's journey to this Zempoala, I must entreat your excellency to give orders for the instant debarkation of my horses and attendants, and permit me to follow them as soon as possible."

"This shall be instantly done," said the admiral. "In the meanwhile, I must beg to entertain you with the sight of one of those personages who will be your companions on the journey."

CHAPTER III.

At the signal of the admiral, an officer made his appearance, received certain commands, the most agreeable of which to the young cavalier were those in reference to his own liberation, and then immediately withdrew.

"Thou wilt now see, worthy cousin," said Cavallero, "a man, whom, although a base Moor and infidel, thou shouldst regard with some sort of admiration; since, from the reports of those who brought him hither, he is endowed with a spirit and pugnacity worthy even of a Christian."

While the admiral spoke, the door of the cabin was darkened by the bodies of several men, who, at his beck, advanced, and stood full in the view of the neophyte. He perceived in these, besides two or three officers of the ship, nothing more, with a single exception, than the rough figures of ordinary sailors. This exception presented itself in the bronzed visage and wildly attired person of the Moor; and Amador almost started, when the bright eyes of the pagan rolled from the admiral to himself in a brief but most penetrating stare. In person, the Moor was somewhat above the ordinary stature, but his limbs, though hardy and active enough, were much attenuated. His face was emaciated and bony, and the long black locks falling wildly over it, gave it an appearance exceedingly haggard,—a character greatly augmented by the white eyeballs flashing like stars in its almost Nubian blackness. Something perhaps was to be allowed for the effect of his uncouth and savage attire, which was composed almost entirely of skins, seemingly of dogs or wolves, a portion of which encircled his loins as a tunic, while the remainder lay, like a cape or short cloak, about his shoulders. Under this latter garment, however, was a shirt of cotton, stained with bright colours; and a kerchief of similar mate-

rial glittered, not so much like a turban as a fillet, round his head. Rude sandals, strapped as high as the midleg with shreds cut from his cloak, completed the primitive costume of the barbarian.

"This fellow," said the admiral, turning from him to one who seemed as chief of the seamen,—“this fellow is then the commander of that Sallee pirate, you took among the Canaries?”

“Commander or not, I cannot say,” said the sailor, with a shrug; “but chief varlet at the gun, as I am free to maintain; and freer was he at that same ordnance than was like to be safe for the good snow, *La Encarnacion*, as her ribs may yet testify. But the knave speaks Spanish; and if your excellency chooses to ask him, can tell you his rank and condition.”

“No commander—no pirate!” said the Moor, with a voice whose soft and harmonious accents contrasted strangely with his rude appearance. “No commander—no pirate,” he repeated in good Castilian; “but a poor Morisco of Fez, voyaging in a harmless trader to the Gibbel-al-Tarik.”

“The Gibbel-al-Tarik,” said the admiral, dryly, “would have been much beholden for the new visit of an infidel.”

“No commander, no pirate, no infidel!” said the Moor, earnestly; “but a poor shepherd of Fez, brought to a knowledge of the true faith, and driven from the home of his fathers for the exercise of it, to the land of his fathers’ enemies.”

“Moor,” said the admiral, composedly, “there are three reasons why I should not believe thee: First, because thou *art* a Moor, and therefore born to be a liar and deceiver; secondly, because, unless God should have worked a greater miracle for the good of a besotted heathen than he often vouchsafes to prayerful Christians, there is no possibility thou couldst be converted to the faith among the sands of Barbary; and thirdly, because the fact that thou art skilful in the management of ordnance, is sufficient proof thou *canst not* be an ignorant shepherd of Fez, whose

hands are more commonly trained to the spear and arrow, than to the quoin and linstock."

"He manages them," said the sailor, "as if he had been born with them in his hands; as I have made proof, sometimes, for my amusement, during the tedium of the voyage."

"If my lord will listen to me," said the Moor eagerly, though humbly, "I will make it apparent that I speak nothing but the truth.—My father drew his first breath among the Almogavars of the desert; his son opened his eyes among the hills of Granada."

"Ha!" cried the admiral; "thou art then one of the accursed tribe of mine own land!"

"A Morisco of the Alpujarras," said the Moor, submissively; "whom, in my very early youth, it pleased my father to have baptized in the holy faith, as was the command of his most faithful and ever-blessed majesty, the king Fernando, the conqueror of the kings of Granada. This will show, my lord, that I speak the words of a Christian. As an Almogavar, I was born to be a soldier, and so trained to all arms of an Almogavar, the knife and dart, the spear and axe, the cross-bow and musket, as well as other weapons of Christians. This will show my lord how it came that I was found skilful at the cannon."

"Thou speakest like a cunning and most honest man," said the admiral, gravely; "but all this revelation does not show me how an Almogavar of Granada became a herdsman of the desert; and, after that, how the herdsman of the desert was transformed into the gunner of a Sallee corsair, or, as thou callest her, a harmless trader, on her innocent voyage to Gibraltar."

"May it please my lord," said the Almogavar, bending for a moment his troubled eyes on the admiral, as if to resolve himself whether or not these questions were put to him in mockery, and then casting them instantly on the floor; "may it please my lord to remember that after the fall of Granada and the subjugation of the Alpujarras, many Moors, *Christian as well as pagan*, preferring rather to lament

their miseries at a distance than in their own enslaved country, chose to accept the merciful permission of the king, and withdrew from the land altogether. This did I, my lord's servant and slave. I fled to the country of my father; and although, there, I suffered many indignities and hardships, as well as constant peril, as being suspected to be an apostate to the faith of the land, I had been content to drag out a wearisome life, but for one grief that was sharper than others."

"I will shrive thee as patiently as thy confessor," said the admiral; "but while thou art speaking the sharpest of thy calamities, it will be much proof to me of the sincerity of thy religion, if thou use language somewhat of the briefest."

"My son," said the Moor, hurriedly, "my son, that was the lamp of my eyesight, the perfume of my nostrils, the song and music of my soul, was in great danger to be led astray, and converted back to infidelity. To save him from the contagion of heathenism, I resolved to return to Granada, where, though he might grow up to bondage, he should be free from the thrall of darkness: it was better he should be a slave than an infidel. With these thoughts and these hopes in my heart, I embarked in the Sallee trader; when it was my hard fate to be arrested in my course by these men of the Canaries."

"Thy course," said the admiral, "was none of the straightest; and how thou couldst find thy way to Gibraltar by way of the Fortunate Isles, is much more than my nautical experience can teach me to understand."

"A great storm," said the Moor, with the deepest humility, "drove us from our course; and it was the will of God that when the tempest subsided, we should find ourselves beset by two strong ships, which nothing but the fears and desperation of our captain could have tempted him to think of resisting. We fought, and were subdued; the lives of my son and myself were preserved out of the horrors of that com-

bat. The ships were traders of the Isles, bound to these new lands; they brought us hither; where there is nothing left us but to claim the privileges of our faith, acknowledge ourselves the thrall and bondmen of his majesty the king, and entreat of my lord to send us, when it may suit his good pleasure, to our homes and our altars in Granada."

The Moor concluded his speech with a degree of eagerness approaching almost to vehemence. The admiral indifferently rejoined:—

"Thy name is Abdalla——?"

"Abdoul al Sidi," said the Moor, hastily. "When my father gave me up to be baptized, he called me, in token of his true devotion and humility, Esclavo de la Cruz; but in my days of darkness I was known as Abdoul al Sidi, a poor Almogavar, but descended from the ancient lords of Fez."

"Sidi Abdalla, or sir Slave of the Cross, whichever it may please you to be called," said the admiral, coolly, "in respect to your lordly descent and most dignified title, which I think no Christian has dared to assume since the days of the Cid Rodrigo, I will, before determining how far I can make your fate agreeable to your wishes, condescend to compare your story with that of the brave sailor, of the Encarnacion, who captured you."

"If I am to say any thing," said the master, gruffly, "it will be first to pronounce this same Abdalla, or Esclavo, as he calls himself, a hypocrite and knave not to be trusted. It is true there was a great storm, which might have driven his piratical galley into the neighbourhood of the Canaries; but that he showed any extraordinary ardour to escape, as long as my consort was out of sight, is a matter not to be believed. Trusting to his skill in the management of the great *mangonneau*, with which the galley was armed, and not doubting to cripple me with some lucky ball, before I could approach him, he fell to with right good will; and it was not until my consort joined in the *melée* that I was able to lay him

aboard. Even then, when our crews were springing on his decks, and his fellow-pirates had fled in dismay below, I saw him, this very knave Abdalla, with mine own eyes, lay match to the last charge which thundered against us; immediately after which, with a most devilish spirit of desperation, he snatched up his boy, as one would a kitten, and springing to the opposite side, was in the act of dashing himself into the sea, when he was brought down by a pistol-shot."

"I thought they would have murdered my poor Jacinto," said the Almogavar, in a low voice; "and, in my desperation, desired he should rather die the easy death of the deep, than be mangled by cruel daggers."

"There was much fear of that," said the master; "for my sailors had marked him at the linstock with no great love. In faith, there were some five or six cutlasses aimed at his prostrate body; but I could not bear they should slay the boy, who lay on his breast; and therefore I commanded them to hold."

"Thou art a right worthy and noble heart!" said Amador ardently, interrupting him; "for there is no reason a brave soldier, even in the heat of blood, and with a pagan under his foot, should strike at the life of a boy: and hadst thou done otherwise, I swear to thee, I was so much moved by the relation, I should have gone nigh to slay thee for thy barbarity!"

"And besides, señor," said the master complacently, "I was beset with the idea, that if I preserved his life, and brought him to this land of Mexico, I might sell him at a good price as an able cannonier; such a man, as I had good reason to know, being worth the value of a dozen bloodhounds. And besides," he continued, without regarding the expression of disgust and contempt which drove the look of benevolence from the visage of the cavalier, "I had greater reason to applaud my clemency, when I discovered that the boy Jacinto, besides being a comely and very dexterous stripling, was so great

a master of the Moorish lute, singing withal in a most agreeable manner, that I was well assured some noble cavalier among the invaders would not scruple, at any price, to have him for a page."

"I am a Christian! the boy is a Christian!" cried the Moor, hurriedly; "and neither of us can be sold to bondage, except at the command of his most faithful and merciful majesty, the emperor and king; to whose gracious will and pleasure I desire, with my boy, to be rendered."

"Good Cid," said the admiral, "that is a matter wherein, if his majesty's will were certainly known, thou shouldst not have to complain of our negligence; but, under present circumstances, we must make our own judgment the representative of the royal wisdom, and dispose of thee in such manner as we may think most conducive to his majesty's interest. We are resolute thou wilt serve him better by directing the thunders of his cannon against the heathen hordes of Mexico, than by cultivating his vines and fig-trees on the hills of Granada. We must send thee to the commander Narvaez, whom if thou please, he will doubtless advance thee to the command of a falconet, wherewith thou mayst divert many of thy Almogavar propensities for battle and bloodshed. As for the boy, it not appearing to me that the strumming of his strings, or the uplifting of his voice in ballad and redondilla, are, in any wise, necessary to the conquest of this barbarous empire, I may be able, if thou insistest upon that, to send him to Spain."

"I take my lord at his word!" said Abdoul, trembling with eagerness and anxiety; "let the boy be sent to Spain—to Granada—to either of the ports Algeciras, Malaga, or Almeria; and he will find some friends there, to protect his youth and inexperience; while I submit to my harder fate in Mexico."

"To Almeria?" said Amador quickly. "I have myself some acquaintance with that town; and it may perhaps advantage thee to make me thy confidant, if there be any secret friend there thou wouldst

send the boy to; or to take my counsel as to what Christians may be persuaded to show him kindness."

The Moor regarded Amador for an instant with a disturbed but piercing eye. His answer was, however, prevented, by the admiral saying,

"Sir Slave of the Cross, (With the consent of my very noble kinsman :) to cut short all needless discussion on this subject, I may as well inform thee, first, that if thy boy be sent to Spain, it will not be to any port of thy choosing, but to such an one as may seem most fit to other persons, and which will most probably be the port of Seville; wherefrom thou canst better imagine than myself, how thy boy will be helped to Granada. In the second place, as I deem it but honesty to acquaint thee, if the youth be taken from this land, he will first be sent to the excellent señor, the honourable Don Diego Velasquez, governor of Cuba, to be disposed of by him as may seem most agreeable to his judgment; and I warn thee, if the lad be an adept at the lute, as is asserted, Don Diego will find him such employment in twangling to the ladies of our brave cavaliers, as will leave it uncertain how much sooner than doomsday he will be-think him to advance the poor youth on his voyage."

"It is enough!" said the Moor with a gloomy countenance. "God is with us; and it may be better to have the boy among the perils of death than the seductions of pleasure. Let my boy stay with me, and I am content to follow my lord's bidding."—

He bowed his head upon his breast, and, at the signal of the admiral, was led away.

"Señor Capitan," continued Cavallero, addressing the master, who still lingered in the cabin, "I will satisfy thee for the armament thou hast brought, by acknowledgments, which thou must present to the governor. What more Moors hast thou brought with thee from the galley, capable of doing service in these exigencies?"

"The father and son are all," replied the master. "*The others*, as I told your excellency, had fled be-

low from the fury of my sailors. To make all sure, while rummaging about their cabin, we had fastened down the hatches. We had not picked up many things of value, before there was a sudden cry that the pirate was sinking. Whether this happened from a shot she may have received, or because the accursed runagates below had knocked a hole in her bottom, was more than was ever determined. The alarm sent us scampering to our own vessel; and in our hurry, as was natural enough, we forgot the infidels in the hold; so that, when she went down, which she did as soon as we were well clear of her, her crew went along with her.—But your excellency has not told me whether I am to receive pay for Sidi and the boy?"

"I swear to heaven," said the admiral, "thou hast no more heart than thine anchor! Thou shockest me with the detail of a catastrophe, which, though affecting the lives of nothing but heathen Moors, is nevertheless both dreadful and pitiable; and yet thou dost abruptly demand me, 'Shall I have payment for the two lives I saved?' Thou wilt have payment, if it please the governor; and not otherwise. Betake thee to thy ship: I will send thee thy warranties, and the sooner thou leavest with them the better."

The master departed, and again Amador found himself alone with the admiral.

"Cousin," said Cavallero, "I am now able to comply with your wishes. I should have been rejoiced to keep you a prisoner on board the Capitana for a few days; but I will not invite you, when I perceive you are so impatient for freedom. Your horses are doubtless at this moment rolling on the beach; your grooms are with them, either combing the sand from their manes, or scraping the sea-spots from your armour. A company of artisans, with a military escort, is on the eve of marching to the camp of Narvaez. I have given such commands as will secure you the company and friendly aidance of that escort; in ad-

dition to which, I will immediately send after you a trusty officer with despatches concerning yourself, to the general, and recommendations to him to assist you in joining your kinsman, the knight Calavar, without delay. You will easily reach Zempoala by night-fall. I beseech you to salute the general with courtesy; and to-morrow you will be in the arms of your leader."

"I am so overjoyed," said the Cavalier, "at the thought of once more bestriding my poor Fogoso, and exchanging the stupid pitching of a ship for the bound of his gallop and curvet, that I know not how I can do otherwise than treat the Biscayan with urbanity."

"A barge is ready to conduct you to the shore," continued the admiral, leading the young soldier to the side of the vessel. "I pray heaven to give you a prosperous journey, and to carry you with as much safety as honour through the weapons of the heathen multitude. Make my devoirs to his noble valour, the good knight of Rhodes; and say to the señor Cortes, that though fate has arrayed me against him as an enemy, I cannot forget the friendship of our past lives. Nay," continued Cavallero, with emphasis, "tell him, that though it does not become me, as an officer commissioned by Velasquez, to hold any communications with him excepting those of simple form and civility, I shall be well pleased when heaven has removed the obstruction, and left me at liberty to meet him with full friendship and confidence. This salutation," said the admiral significantly, "there is no reason thou shouldst impart to Narváez; for he is distrustful and suspicious to that degree, that, I do not doubt, he would torture its harmlessness into a matured treason."

"I will do your bidding," said Amador blithely, "both to the Biscayan, and the cavalier of Medellín. And now, with a thousand acknowledgments for your favour and assistance, and as many wishes for your

weal and comfort, I bid you the farewell of a kinsman and true friend."

And so saying, and heartily shaking the hand of his excellency, the young cavalier sprang into the boat, and was soon wafted to the beach.

CHAPTER IV.

THE rapture with which Don Amador de Leste exchanged the confined decks of the caravel for the boundless sands of Ulua, and these again for the back of his impatient steed, was fully as great as he had promised himself. Profound was his joy to find the demon of ennui, which had beset the cribbed and confined charger as sorely as the cabined master, flying from his dilated nostrils, and giving place to the mettlesome ardour which had won him the title of the Fiery. The neigh that he sent forth was like the welcome of the battle; the fire that flashed in his eye was bright as the red reflection of a banner; and when he reared up under his rider, it was as if to paw down the opposition of crouching spearmen. A few snuffs of the morning breeze, a few bounds over the sandy hillocks, and the beast that had pined in stupefaction in a narrow stall on the sea, was converted into an animal fit for the seat of a warrior.

The cavalier galloped about for a few moments, while his attendants made their preparations for the journey. Then returning, like a thoughtful leader, to inquire into their welfare, he beheld them with great satisfaction, both horse and man, in good condition to commence their adventurous campaign.

The elder of his followers was a personage of years and gravity; a mass of grizzled locks fell from under his iron skull-cap, and a shaggy beard of the same reverend hue ornamented his cheeks and throat. He had seen long and sharp service, for besides the many scars that marked his swarthy visage, one of which,

from its livid hue, seemed to have been won in recent combat, a sabre-cut, extending over his left cheek and brow, had darkened the sinister eye forever. But his frame, though somewhat short and squat, was robust and even gigantic in proportions; and the muscles springing under the narrow cuishes, which, together with a heavy breast-plate, made nearly the whole of his defensive armour, did not seem less of iron than their covering. He was truly a man-at-arms worthy to follow at the heels of a valiant cavalier.

The second attendant, though armed with little more care than the former, had contrived, by the judicious distribution of riband-knots and sashes about his person, to assume a more gallant appearance: and in addition, he had the smoother features and gayer looks of youth. Both were provided with horses strong and not inactive; and both, as Amador returned, were busily engaged in disposing the mails and accoutrements of the cavalier about the bulky loins of their animals.

"Hearken, Lazaro, thou varlet, that flingest my mailed shirt over thy crupper, as if it were a vile horse-cloth," he cried to the younger follower, "have more care what thou art doing. Give my helmet to Baltasar, and let him sling it, with my buckler, over his broad shoulders. I will not entrust thee with such matters; nor, by 'r lady, with my pistols neither."

"If I may make bold to speak," said Baltasar, bending his eye bluffly, and with a sort of rude affection on his young lord, "I can advise a way to dispose of both casque and buckler more agreeably and usefully than on the back of either Lazaro or myself."

"Thou meanest upon mine own, no doubt," said Amador: "I have ever found thee fonder of carrying the arms of a dead foeman than of a living master, though it were the knight Calavar himself."

"That is very true," said the veteran, chuckling *grimly* at the compliment disguised in the sarcasm.

"I am never loath to do such duty: because, then, my conscience tells me I am bearing arms which can no longer be of use to their owner."

"And thou desirest now to intimate, that, if I were arrayed in my harness, I might put it to some use?"

"Quien sabe? who knows?" said Baltasar, looking around him with an earnest eye. "We are now in a strange land, possessed by barbarians, who are good at spear and bow, and fonder of fighting from an ambuscado than on an open field; and with no true companions that I can see, to look that they be not lurking among yonder woodlands, some of which, I take it for granted, we have to pass. I should grieve sorely to see an arrow, even in a boy's hand, aimed at your honour's present hauberk of cloth and velvet."

"Well, thy wisdom will not perish for want of utterance," said Amador; "and, in very truth, I must own, it has sometimes stood me in good stead. I will therefore relieve thee of thy burthen, and Lazaro shall hang it to my own shoulders."

He descended, and the linked surcoat soon invested his person.

"I will also presume to recommend your honour to have these snapdragons hung to your saddle-bow," said Baltasar, extending the rude and ponderous pistols,—weapons then scarcely creeping into notice, but within twenty years, not uncommon in the hands of horsemen; "for if it should come to pass, that some cut-throat pagan should discharge a missile at us from the bushes, it will doubtless afford your honour much satisfaction to shoot him dead on the spot; a punishment that would not be so certain with the weapons in my own hands, or in Lazaro's. And before I could bring my cross-bow from my back, it is possible the knave might have another opportunity to do us mischief."

"In this matter also," said Amador good-humouredly, "I will follow thy instructions. But, I give thee warning, there is something in the feeling of my hau-

berk under this raging sun, that admonishes me how soon my brain would seethe, as in a stew-pan, under the cover of a steel helmet. Wherefore I will have thee carry that in thine own hands, until, from the change of atmosphere, or the appearance of an enemy, I may see fit to alter my resolution."

"I have ever found," said Baltasar, with the pertinacity of age, and, perhaps, of a favourite, "that, under a broiling sun, a well-polished casque of metal is something cooler than a cloth cap; a fact, the reason for which I do not myself understand, and which I should esteem too marvellous for belief, had I not oft-times put it to the proof."

"There is even much truth in what thou art saying," quoth the cavalier, "and I have perhaps philosophy enough to explain the marvel to thee, but that I know philosophy is not much to thy liking. There must be a cold head, however, under the bright cap; otherwise, and with a brain as inflammable as my own, I am very well convinced that bright steel would be just as ignitable as dull iron." And so saying, he again bestrode the champing Fogoso.

"It must be as your honour says," muttered the man-at-arms. "But, as we are all as well prepared now to begin our journey as we will be to-morrow, I would fain know of your favour whither lies our path, or where lags the jackanapes that is to guide us? I heard some talk in the caravel of a great troop of horse and foot, that was to accompany us; but unless it may have been the herd of vagabonds, who, a full hour since, took up their march along the sands, I know not where to look for them among these few tinkers and sailors that are strolling yonder among the huts of bamboo."

"I have much reliance on the friendship and courtesy of my cousin, the admiral," said Amador hastily; "but I must confess, that, saving the appearance of yonder bridled horse, (which may be in waiting for the officer he told me of,) it looks very much, now, as if he had left me to mine own guidance. Nay, I

wrong the worthy señor," he cried quickly, as turning with some doubt and indignation towards the ship, he beheld a boat leave her, and approach the shore with all the speed of oars; "the guide he promised me is, without doubt, in that barge; and the bridled horse, which, as I can perceive even at this distance, is none of the bravest, is the beast whereon he will keep us company."

As Amador conjectured, the boat contained his promised companion, who instantly sprang upon the beach and on the caparisoned animal, and in a few moments was at the side of the cavalier. He was young and handsome, an adult in stature, but scarcely a man in deportment, for as he removed his cap to make the obeisance of an inferior, there was a strong tincture of confusion and trepidation in his countenance. This was perhaps owing, in part, to a consciousness of having merited a reprimand for overdelay, and in part also to his suddenly finding himself confronted with so warlike a personage as the neophyte. Amador of the caravel was a different person from Amador armed and mounted; and, indeed, as he sat on his noble bay, mailed and sworded, and with two goodly armsmen at his back, he was such a martial figure as might have moved an older messenger to reverence.

"Señor caballero," said the youth, with a stammering voice, "my master and patron, the admiral, has appointed me, his secretary, to be your guide to the Indian city Zempoala; and I have to beg your pardon, if, waiting for the letters wherewith it was his excellency's will to charge me, and to make some needful preparation of my own, I have detained your favour somewhat longer than was agreeable."

"I am ever bound to thank his excellency," said Amador; "and as I well suppose, your own preparations had some weighty relation to the business you have in charge, I will not take it upon me to express any dissatisfaction with your delay."

"In truth," said the secretary, ingenuously, "I was "

loath to depart without such armour about me as should beseem the attendant of a true cavalier; in the fitting of which I fell into some perplexity, as not finding a corselet that did not, in some manner, incommode my ribs; and besides, the sabres were all so unwieldy and rough about the hilts, I was in some despair I should never find one to my liking."

"Señor secretario," said Amador, with a smile of good-humoured contempt, surveying the youth, and observing the cuirass chosen with no discretion and donned without skill, "I am of opinion, that in the company of myself and my attendants, you will find no occasion for such troublesome apparel; and it is my advice, grounded on your admission of inexperience in such matters, that, should we, on our march, be beset by any enemies, you take post instantly behind my veteran Baltasar, whose broad breast will stand you in greater stead than your ill-chosen cuirass, and whose arm will do you better service than the sabre in your own hands."

"Señor," said the youth, colouring, "I am no soldier nor cavalier; I have ever had my breast more bruised by the scribe's table than the weight of a breast-plate, and my fingers have heretofore known more of the goose-quill than the sword. Nevertheless I am both willing and desirous to be placed where the knowledge of weapons may be obtained, and to encounter such risks as are the helpers to knowledge. It was from no lack of beseeching on mine own part, that his excellency has heretofore denied me permission to try my fate among the cavaliers ashore; nor should I have hoped that pleasure so early, but that I found his excellency was bent to do you honour, by making a confidential servant your attendant, and was therefore easily persuaded to give me the opportunity I have so long coveted, of looking a little into the strange sights of this marvellous land."

"I am to understand then," said Amador gravely, "that his excellency, the admiral, has entrusted the

charge of guiding me to Zempoala to an individual who has never before put foot on the wilderness that divides us from it?"

"It is true, señor," said the secretary, "that I have never been to Zempoala. But I hope your favour will not doubt me for that reason, nor take offence at the admiral. I am enjoined to conduct you to the reinforcement that set out an hour ago. Its tracks are plain enough along the beach; and as it is composed principally of footmen, there is no doubt we will overtake it before another hour has elapsed. I am confident I can lead your favour without difficulty to the party; among which are guides well acquainted with the country."

"Let us set out then, in heaven's name," said the cavalier: "the day is wasting apace; the sun climbs high in the vault; and the sooner we are sheltered from its fury among some of yonder distant forests, the better will it be for us. St. John be our guide, and the Holy Virgin favour us.—Amen! Let us depart."

CHAPTER V.

As the secretary anticipated, the tracks of the reinforcement were plainly discernible over the sandy downs and by the margins of the pestilent fens, which gave an air of desolation to this part of the Mexican coast, not much relieved by an occasional clump of palms, nor by the spectacle, here and there disclosed, of the broad ocean blackening among the low islets; though the hazy and verdant ramparts which stretched between these burning deserts and the imagined paradises of the interior, ever presented a field of refreshment and interest to the eyes of the travellers. The novelty of their situation, felt more or less intensely by all, was exciting: and many a dream

of barbaric monarchs reposing on thrones of gold and emeralds, and canopied by flowers and feathers,—of dusky armies deploying among green valleys and on the borders of fair lakes,—and perhaps of themselves doing the work of heroes among these mystic multitudes,—wandered through their overtroubled fancies.

Such visions flitted over the brain of Amador, but mingled with others, with which the past had more to do than the present; for, despite the eager longing with which he looked forward to a meeting with his good knight and kinsman, and notwithstanding his impatient ardour to gaze with his own eyes upon those scenes which were filling the minds of men with wonder, he looked back from a sand-hill to the distant ships, and sighed, as, in an instant of time, his soul was borne from them, over the broad surges to the pleasant hills of Spain.

But with the view of the squadron vanished his memory and his melancholy; the narrow belt of sand-hills along the coast had been exchanged for the first zone of vegetation; the mimosa afforded its shade; the breeze and the paroquet chattered together on its top; and when he came, at last, to journey among the shadows of a forest rich in magnificent and unknown trees and plants, with here a lagoon fringed with stately ceibas (the cotton-wood trees of Mexico) and gigantic canes, and there a water-course murmuring among palms and other tropical trees, he gave himself up to a complacent rapture. He remarked with satisfaction the bright plumage of water-fowl,—the egret, the pelican, the heron, and sometimes the flamingo, sporting among the pools; gazed with wonder after the little *picaflor*, or humming-bird, darting, like a sunbeam, from flower to flower; with still greater admiration listened to the song of the calandra and the cardinal, and to the magical *centzonli*,—the hundred-tongued,—as it caught and repeated, as if with a thousand voices, *the thousand roundelays* of other songsters scattered

among the boughs ; and it was not until the notes of a trumpet, swelling suddenly in the distance, invaded his reveries, that he roused from the voluptuous intoxication of such a scene.

"It is the trumpet of the soldiers, señor !" cried the secretary, joyously ; "and it rejoices me much, for I know not how much longer I could have followed their obscure tracks through this forest. And besides, I find, as I must in honesty confess, I have in me so little of the skill of a leader, that I would gladly submit to be led myself, especially by your worship, though it were to follow you to battle as an humble esquire."

"I must commend your spirit, señor Lorenzo Fabueno," (for so the secretary had called himself,) "though I must needs believe your inexperience in all matters of war might render such an attempt exceedingly difficult, if not altogether impossible."

"Señor," said the secretary, eagerly, "I have the wish, and doubtless the ability, in course of time, to learn all the duties, and to acquire some of the skill, of a soldier ; and under so noble a leader as your favour, I am sure I should advance much faster than ever I did in the learning of a clerk. And, in addition to the little service I might render with my sword, I have such skill with the pen as might be of good use to your honour."

"I have no certain assurance," said Amador, "that I shall have any occasion to use my own sword ; it is utterly beyond my imagination to discover to what use I could put the inkhorn of a secretary ; and finally, I know not how the course of events in these deserts may require me to add to the number of my associates. Nevertheless, señor Lorenzo, if it be the wish of his excellency the admiral, that his secretary should be transformed into a soldier, I see not how I can refuse to give my assistance to the conversion."

"I know not why I should be dungeoned in a ship's cabin," said Lorenzo, with a sort of petulance, "when other youths are roaming at liberty among these brave

hills; and gnawing a quill with disgust, when all my old schoolmates are carving out reputation with more manly implements. I am sure I was not born to slave forever at the desk."

"This may be all true, as, in my opinion, it is both natural and reasonable," said Amador, with gravity; "for, it seems to me, man was brought into the world for a nobler purpose than to scribble on paper. Yet you have not made it apparent that the admiral's wishes are in this matter consonant with your own."

"I know not that they are," replied the secretary, "but, as I now feel myself at liberty, with both horse and sword, I cannot help feeling that they ought to be. How I can ever have the heart to return to my bondage again, is more than I can tell; and I am confident, if it were your favour's desire he should grant me permission to follow you through this land, he would make no opposition, the more particularly that your favour is his kinsman."

"I doubt whether the consent would not be wrung from his courtesy; and I cannot well agree to rob him of one who may be a valuable servant. Neither, under such circumstances, can I think of encouraging you in your ardour, or recommending you, at present, to change your pursuits, for which you are better fitted than for mine. Nay," said the cavalier good-naturedly, observing the chagrin of the youth, "if you are resolutely bent on your purpose, it is my advice you make your petitions to his excellency; and when he has granted them, as doubtless he will, you can, with a free mind, seek the patronage of some cavalier engaged in these armies of invasion.—Hark! the trumpet sounds louder and nearer, and by my faith, I see on yonder rising ground the bodies of men and the glimmer of weapons! Spur thy horse a little; (and, I pr'ythee, fling thy shoulders a jot backwards, sitting erect and at ease; for I promise thee, this manner of riding, as if thou wouldst presently be hugging at thy nag's neck, is neither becoming nor advantageous;)

—spur me up a little, and we will join company with them.”

The long and straggling train with which the travellers caught up, just as it issued from the forest upon an open tract of low sandy hills and plains, was composed of motley materials. A few mounted men, who, by their armour and bustling activity, seemed the leaders and commanders, were scattered among a horde of footmen, a portion of whom were armed and ranked as a company of military, but the greater part being the ordinary native labourers, who served the office of mules, and bore on their backs the burdens of the invaders. Some five or six score of these swarthy creatures, followed by a dozen Castilian crossbowmen and a single horseman, brought up the rear. They stalked in a line one after another, each bending to his burden; and in their uniformity of equipment, gait, muscular figures, and solemn visages, added not a little to the singularity of the spectacle. A narrow strip of some vegetable texture, so rude and coarse that it seemed rather a mat than a cloth, was wrapped round the loins of each, leaving their strong and tawny bodies otherwise naked. No sandal protected their soles from the heated soil; and no covering, save only the long and matted locks swinging about their countenances, defended their heads from the scorching sun. A huge basket of cane, the *petlacalli*, or *petaca* of the Spaniards, carelessly covered with matting, and evidently well charged with military stores and provision, weighed upon the shoulders of each, while it was connected by a broad strap to the forehead. Thus burthened, however, and thus exposed to a temperature which, as the day advanced, seemed, in the open plains, nearly intolerable to their Christian companions, they strode on with a slow but vigorous step, each bearing a knot of gay flowers or of brilliant feathers, wherewith he defended his face from insects, and perhaps, occasionally, his eyes from the dazzling reflection of the soil. These were the *Tlamémé*, or carriers of Mexico.

The eye of Amador, though at first attracted by this singular train, dwelt with more surprise and curiosity on the crossbowmen, who were sweltering, in common with nearly every Christian of the party, under the thick and uncouth investment of the *escaupil*, a sort of armour which the invaders of Mexico had not disdained to borrow from their despised enemies. This consisted of nothing more than garments of woollen or cotton cloth, cut as much after the fashions of Spain as was possible, quilted so thickly with cotton as to be able to resist the arrow-heads and lance-points of the Indians; which virtue, added to the facility with which it could be obtained and adapted to every part of the body, gave the *escaupil* a decided preference over the few pieces of iron mail which the poverty of the combatants denied them the power of extending to the whole frame. In truth, so common had become this armour, that there were few among the cavaliers of the conquest, except those leaders who despised so unknighly and so unsightly an attire, who were provided with any other. Nevertheless many distinguished captains concealed garments of this material under their iron armour; and the common soldiers of Cortes, after long experience, had fallen upon the plan of quilting it in pieces imitative of morions and breast-plates, which were far from being uncouth or unwieldy. But its efficacy, though strongly explained and urged by the secretary Fabuena, could not blind Don Amador to its ungainliness, as seen in the fashions of raw recruits; and even the solemn gravity of Baltasar was changed to a grin of ineffable derision, and the good-humoured vivacity of Lazaro to a laugh of contempt, when the secretary advised the cavalier to provide his followers with such coats of mail.

“What thinkest thou, Lazaro, rogue?” said Don Amador, merrily. “Thou wert but a bitter groaner over the only cut it was ever thy good hap to meet: and that was by a fair and courteous pistol-shot, *which hath something of an oily way about it;*

whereas these infidel flints and hard woods gash as painfully as an oyster-shell. What sayest thou? Shall I give thee an escaupil, to save thee from new lamentation?"

"May your honour live a thousand years!" said the serving-man. "The tortoise to his shell, the Turk to his turban: heaven never thrust a hornet into the cocoon of a caterpillar, nor a lion into a sheep's skin. Wherefore I will keep my sting and my claws free from the cotton bags; the only merit of which is, that when a man is wounded in them, he has lint ever ready at his fingers."

"For my part," said Baltasar, "I am, in this matter, much of Lazaro's way of thinking. Howsoever, please your favour, when I see these lubberly lumps fight more courageously than myself in my iron trifles, I will straightway change my mind on the subject."

"Hold thy tongue, then," said the cavalier, "lest thou give offence to some of these worthy cotton-coats, who have, in no manner, furnished thee with cause for a quarrel."

The cavalier rode on, followed closely by his attendants, courteously returning the salutations which were everywhere rendered to his apparent rank and martial appearance by the Spanish portion of the train; though not even the glitter of his mail, the proud tramp of his war-horse, nor the stout appearance of his followers, drew a glance from the Tlamémé. The dull apathy which the oppression of ages has flung over the spirits of Mexicans at the present epoch, had already been instilled into the hearts of this class of natives, which with some others, under the prevalence of the common feudalism of barbarians, were little better than bondmen. He rode slowly by them, admiring the sinewy bulk of their limbs, and the ease with which they moved under their heavy burdens.

The van of the train was formed by a score of footmen, all arrayed in the escaupil, and all, with the exception of some five or six, who bore firelocks.

armed with sword and spear. A cavalier of goodly presence, and well mounted, rode at their head; and Amador, thinking he perceived in him the tokens of gentle blood and manners, pressed forward to salute him. The ringing of Fogoso's heels arrested the attention of the leader, who, turning round and beholding the gallant array of the stranger, instantly returned upon his path, and met him with many courteous expressions. At the very moment of meeting, Amador's eye was attracted by a figure, which, in making way for the steed of the leader, had well-nigh been trodden under the hoofs of his own; and in which, when removed from this peril, he instantly remarked the spare person and haggard countenance of the Moor. Holding fast to the hand of the Almogavar, and indeed, for an instant, while the danger lasted, wrapped anxiously in his arms, was a boy, whose youth and terror might have won a second notice, had not the salutation of the officer immediately occupied his attention.

"The señor Amador de Leste," said he—"Thou varlet of an infidel, I will strike thee with my lance!" (This menacing objurgation was addressed to the Moor, at the moment when, most endangered, he wavered with his boy between the horses.) "The señor Amador de Leste," he continued, as the Moor, recovering himself, cowered away, "will not be surprised to find his coming expected, and his presence welcomed, by the general Narvaez, or by his excellency's humble friend and captain, Juan Salvatierra."

"Señor Salvatierra, I give you good thanks," replied Amador; "and although I know not what avant-courier has proclaimed the approach of so obscure an individual as myself, I will not, for that reason, receive your courtesy less gratefully."

"I have with me here," said Salvatierra, with a stately condescension, "several of your fellow-voyagers of the caravel; among whom it would have been strange indeed if any had forgotten the name of so *honourable* a companion."

"Those cavaliers of the caravel," said Amador, dryly, "who condescend to claim me as a companion, do me thereby a greater honour than I am desirous to do myself. My companions are, as you may see, my two men-at-arms; to which we will at present add the young señor Fabueno, whom, as the secretary of his excellency the admiral Cavallero, I am not indisposed to acknowledge."

There was something in the tone of the haughty and even arrogant neophyte, that might have nettled his new friend; but its only effect, beside bringing a little colour upon his rather pallid cheeks, was to rob his suavity of somewhat of its loftiness.

"It is for hidalgos and cavaliers of knightly orders," he said, "and not for ignoble adventurers, to aspire to the fellowship of a valiant knight of San Juan."

"I am no knight of San Juan," said Amador, "but a simple novice, who may one day claim admission to the illustrious order (by right of birth,) or not, as it may please the destinies and mine own humour. Nevertheless I have much pleasure to speak of the order and its valiant brothers, at every opportunity, and at the present moment I am moved to ask your favour, as relying much on your knowledge, what tidings have been last had of the good knight Calavar, an eminent branch of that most lordly, though thunder-stricken, stock."

"Concerning the knight of Calavar," said Salvatierra blandly, "it is my grief to assure you that his madness——"

"Call it his melancholy! or his humour!" said Amador, sternly; "and let it be some mitigation to your surprise, if my correction sound like a rebuke, to know that I am his kinsman."

Again did the colour mount into the cheeks of the cavalier, and again did his courtesy, or his discretion, get the better of the impulse that raised it.

"The kinsman of that valiant and renowned gentleman," he said politely, "shall command me to any epithet he chooses. The señor De Leste will doubt-

less ament to hear that his kinsman, with an eccentricity scarce worthy his high birth and knightly dignity, still stoops to be the follower of an inferior and rebel, the outcast and proclaimed outlaw, Hernan Cortes."

"As far as my own judgment is concerned in this matter, señor caballero," said Amador coolly, "I very much doubt whether I shall lament that circumstance at all. The knight Calavar will not disparage his dignity or his profession, by choosing to serve where a little-minded man might covet to command. Such a condescension in him, besides being a new proof of magnanimity and fidelity to his vows, whereby he is sworn never to make peace with the infidel, is only an evidence to me that the cavalier Cortes, whom you call a rebel and outlaw, must be a man worthy of much more respectful appellations; as indeed, methinks, your own reflections should show you must be the due of any associate of the knight of Calavar."

The unaffected surprise, and even consternation, with which the follower of Narvaez heard the neophyte thus speak of his leader's enemy, might perhaps have urged Amador to the utterance of commendations still more unequivocal, had not his eye at that moment been caught by the shadow on the sand of a man striding nearer to the flanks of Fogoso than he had supposed any footman to be. His own position was near the side of the company of musketeers and spearmen mentioned before; his followers, not being willing to obtrude upon the privacy of the cavaliers, had fallen a little back; and the Morisco, as he took it for granted, was lagging some distance behind. His surprise was therefore not a little excited, when looking round, he beheld the Almogavar so close at his side as to be able to overhear all that was said, and drinking his words with an expression of the intensest interest.

"Son of a dog!" cried Salvatierra, who beheld *him* at the same time, and who was not unwilling to

vent some of the gall that Amador had raised in his bosom, upon so legitimate an object,—“I will see if I cannot teach thee how to thrust thyself among soldiers and hidalgos!”

“Softly, señor Caballero!” cried Amador, observing the captain raising his lance; “strike not Abdalla; for I have it in my power to inform you, that, although in some sense your prisoner, and, to the eye of a stranger, a most helpless and wretched varlet, he has shown himself to be possessed of a spirit so worthy of respect, that you will do yourself foul shame to strike him.”

The lance of the cavalier was turned away from the shrinking Moor.

“Don Amador de Leste shall command my weapon, whether it be to smite or to spare,” said Salvatierra, smothering the rage which every word and action of the neophyte seemed fated to inspire, and advancing to the head of the train.

“Harkee, Sidi Abdalla,” continued Amador, beckoning complacently to the retiring Morisco, “it is not in my nature to see indignity of any kind heaped upon a man who hath not the power of vengeance, and especially a man who hath in him the virtue of courage, without raising a hand in his defence.”

“My lord speaks the truth,” said Abdoul, with a subdued voice; “the Almogavar hath not the power of vengeance:—The strong man may strike him, the proud may trample, and he cannot resist; the cavalier may wound with the lance, the soldier may smite with the unthonged bow.—It is all one;—his head is bare, his breast open, his hand empty:—he can neither resist nor avenge.”

“By St. John of Jerusalem,” said the cavalier warmly, moved to a stronger feeling for the friendless Morisco, “I remember, as was confessed by that beast of a Canary captain, that when thine enemies were on thy decks, and thy friends fled from thy side, (for which they deserved to sink to the bottom, as they did;) thou hadst the courage to discharge thy

mangonneau into the victorious trader; for which reason chiefly, but partly because thou hast avowed thyself a Christian proselyte, I will take it upon me, as far as it may be in my power, to be thy protector and champion."

"My lord is good," said the Moor, bending his head low on his breast; "and in the day of my death I will not forget his benevolence. The Almogavar was born to grief; trouble came at his first hour; his first breath was the sigh of Granada, his first cry was mingled with the groans of his enslaved people, his first look was on the tears of his father. Sorrow came in youth, anguish in manhood, and misery is in the footsteps of years. My lord is great and powerful; he protects me from the blow of a spear.—He can save me from a grief that strikes deeper than a thousand spears!"

"As I am a true gentleman and Christian," said Amador, "I will hold to my word, to give thee protection and aid, as far as my power lies."

"The feeble boy that totters over these scorching sands!" said the Moor, raising his eyes wistfully to the cavalier, and turning them for an instant with a look of unspeakable wildness to his son.—The cavalier looked back, in that momentary pause, and beheld the young Morisco. He seemed a boy of not more than twelve years. The soldier judged only from his stature, for a garment of escaupil of unusual thickness completely invested and concealed his figure; while his face drooping, as if from weariness, on his breast, was hidden by a cap slouching in disorder, and by long ringlets that fell in childish profusion over his shoulders.

"The boy!" continued Abdalla, turning again to the neophyte, and raising his clasped hands as if in supplication. "Is it fit his tender years should be passed among the horrors of a camp? among the dangers of a wild war? among the vices and contaminations of a brutal soldiery? If it were possible,"—and here the voice of the Almogavar trembled with

eagerness;—"if it were possible that boy could be sent to Granada,—nay, to Barbary,—anywhere, where, for his father's sake, he should be granted a refuge and asylum; then might the curse be uttered, the blow struck, and Abdoul, receiving it as the payment of his debt, would not call upon his lord for vengeance."

"Thou heardest from the admiral," said Amador, "how impossible would be the gratification of such a wish; since, even were he parted from this shore, it rests with another, who, I can, upon mine own knowledge, assure thee, is not likely to help him on his way, whether he shall not waste his days among the planters of the islands; who, according to common report, are not a whit less wild and debauched than their friends here in Mexico."

"God is just!" cried the Moor, clasping his hands in despair.

"Nevertheless," continued Amador, "I will not fail to make thy petition, backed with my own request, to the señor Narvaez; and at the worst, it is not improbable some good cavalier may be found who will consent to receive him as a page, and treat him with kindness."

"God is just!" reiterated the Moor, with a gloomy sorrow; "and the arrow of the savage may save him from the wrong of the Christian."

"I tell thee again," said Amador, "I will not forget to do my best for his welfare, at the first opportunity. But tell me, Abdalla"—The Morisco was dropping behind: he returned.—"I had forgotten to ask thee a question for which I first called thee. I was speaking to this hot-tempered captain of the knight Calavar—By heaven! it was thus I saw thine eyes sparkle before! Is there any magic in the name, that it should move thee to such emotion?"

"The knight Calavar," said the Morisco, "was among the conquerors of the Alpujarras; and how can I hear his name, and not bethink me of the black day of my country? His name is in our Moorish

ballads; and when the orphan sings them, he mourns over the fate of his father."

"That the knight Calavar did good service among those rebellious mountaineers, I can well believe," said the cavalier, hastily; "but that he did not temper his valour with mercy, is an assertion which no man can make to me with perfect safety. As to those ballads of which you speak, I am not certain if they be not the invention of some devilish magician, opposed to honourable war and glory; since it is their sole purpose to keep one thinking of certain sorrowful particulars, that may be a consequence of victory and conquest, such as tearful widows and destitute orphans; and I must declare, for mine own part, such is the mischievous tendency of these madrigals, that sometimes, after hearing them, I have had my imagination so enchanted, as to look with disgust at war, and almost to lament that I ever had struck at the life of a human being. I shall like well to have thy boy sing to me; but, as I will tell him beforehand, it must be of lovelorn knights, and of knights going to battle, and never a word about widows and orphans."

CHAPTER VI.

At midday, the squadron, after having accomplished more than half the journey, halted for rest and refreshment on the banks of a little river, under the shade of pleasant trees. The Tlamémé threw down their bundles, and, apart from the rest, betook themselves to their frugal meal. A plantain, a cake of maize, or a morsel of some of the nameless but delicious fruits of the clime, perhaps growing at their side, prepared them for the enjoyment of slumber; while the Spaniards, grouped among the trees, added

to this simple repast the more substantial luxury of the *tasajo*, or jerked beef of the islands.

As for the cavalier De Lestè, not having bethought him to give orders for the preparation of such needful munitions, he was glad to accept the invitation of the captain Salvatierra to share his meal; and this he did the more readily, that, having entered into farther conversation with the leader, after the affair of the lance, it was the good fortune of this gentleman to stumble upon no more offensive topics. In addition to this, he observed with great satisfaction, that Salvatierra, preserving among his subalterns the stateliness which he had vailed to the neophyte, did not mean to trouble him with their society; and it was only at his express desire that the secretary Fabueno was admitted to partake of their repast. The excellent taste of the worthy commander, or perhaps the wisdom of his attendants, several of whom, both Christian and pagan, being in constant waiting, gave him an appearance of great rank and importance, had provided a stock of food, which, in variety and quantity, might have satisfied the hunger of half the squadron. Here, besides the heavenly anana, the grateful manioc, and other fruits and roots with which the cavalier had become acquainted in the islands, he was introduced to the royal chirimoya, the zapote, and other fruits as new as they were delicious. But, above all these delights with which Providence has so bountifully enriched the lands of Mexico, did Don Amador admire the appearance of certain fowls, which, though neither reeking nor smoking with their savoury juices, but drawn cold from their covering of green leaves, were of so agreeable a character as to fill his mind with transport.

"Either this land is the very paradise of earth!" said he, "or, señor Salvatierra, you have the most goodly purveyors among your household, that ever loaded the table of man. I will be much beholden to your favour to know the name of this fowl I am eating, which, from its bulk, one might esteem a

goose, but which, I am sure, is no such contemptible creature."

"That," said the leader, "is a sort of great pheasant, the name of which I have not yet schooled my organs to pronounce, but which, being taken among the hills and trained in the cottages of the Indians, becomes as familiar and loving as a dog; and is therefore always ready when its master is hungry."

"By my life, then!" said Amador, "I am loath to eat it; for it seems to me, the creature that loves us is more worthy to be consecrated in the heart, than immolated to the cravings of the stomach. I will therefore desire to know something of that other featherless monster at your elbow, previous to determining upon its fitness for mastification."

"Your favour need entertain no scruples about this bird," said the captain; "for although domesticated, and kept by the Indians about their houses in great flocks, it hath too much affection for itself to trouble itself much about its masters. It is a kind of peacock, and without possessing any of the resplendent beauty of that animal, it is endowed with all its vanity and pride; so that, when strutting about with its shaven head and long-gobbed beard, its feathers ruffled in a majestic self-conceit, our soldiers have sometimes, for want of a better name, called it *el Turco*."

"A better name could not have been invented," said the neophyte; "for if it be true, as is sometimes asserted by those who know better than myself, that heretics and infidels are the food of the devil, I know no morsel should be more agreeable to his appetite than one of those same pagans that give name to this foolish and savoury creature."

The thoughts of Amador, as he sat testing the merits of the noble fowl, which is one among the many blessings America, in after days, scattered over the whole world, wandered from Mexico to Rhodes, from the peaceful enjoyment of his dinner to the uproar and horror of a siege, from a dead fowl to the

turbaned Turk; and then, by a similar vagary, jumped at once from the magnificent infidel to the poor Morisco who had lately trod the desert at his side. As the image of Abdoul al Sidi entered his brain, he looked round and beheld the proselyte sitting with his boy in the shadow of a palm, remote from the rest; and a pang smote him, as he perceived, that, among the scores who sat glutting their appetites around, not one had dropped a morsel of food into the hands of the Almogavar or his child.

"Harkee, Lazaro, thou gluttonous villain!" he cried, with a voice that instantly brought the follower, staring, to his side; "dost thou feed like a pelican, and yet refuse to share thy meal, as a pelican would, with a helpless fellow of thy race? Take me this lump of a Turk to Sidi Abdalla, and bid him feed his boy."

"I will suggest to your favour," said the captain Salvatierra, with a grin, "that Lazaro be directed to bring the urchin hither, with his lute, of which it is said he is no mean master; and before he eats he shall sing us a song, which, thus, he will doubtless execute with more perfection than after he has gorged himself into stupidity or the asthma."

"I agree to that, with all my heart," said the neophyte. "The boy can sing while we are eating, provided the poor fellow be not too hungry."

Lazaro strode to the Moriscos; and in an instant, as they rose, Amador beheld the Sidi take the instrument from his own back where he had carried it, and put it into the hands of his offspring. The boy received it, and, as Amador thought, removed the gay covering, with a faltering hand. Nevertheless, in a few moments, this preparation was accomplished, and, with Abdalla, the stripling stood trembling from weariness or timidity at the side of the group.

"Moor," said Salvatierra, before Amador had commenced his benevolent greeting, "the noble and valiant cavalier hath charitably commanded thou shouldst eat thy dinner at our feet; which whilst thou

art doing, we will expect thy lad to entertain us with such sample of his skill in luting and singing as may make our own repast more agreeable."

"That is, if the boy be not too hungry," said the good-natured neophyte. "I should blush to owe my pleasures to any torments of his own, however slight; and (as I know by some little famine wherewith we were afflicted at Rhodes,) there is no more intolerable anguish with which one can be cursed, than this same unhumoured appetite."

"Jacinto will sing to my lord," said the Almogavar submissively.

But Jacinto was seized with such a fit of trembling, as seemed for a time to leave him incapable; and when, at last, he had sufficiently subdued his terror, to begin tuning his instrument, he did it with so slow and so hesitating a hand, that Salvatierra lost patience, and reproved him harshly and violently.

It happened, unluckily for the young Moor, that, at that moment, the eye of Amador wandered to Fogoso, and beheld him wallowing, with more of the spirit of a yeoman's hog than a warrior's charger, in a certain miry spot near to which he had been suffered to crop the green leaves. He called hastily and wrathfully to Lazaro, and, in his indignation, entirely lost sight of his dinner, his host, and the musician.

"Whelp of a heathen!" said Salvatierra to the shrinking lad: "hast thou no more skill or manners, but to make this accursed jangling, to which there seems no end? Bestir thyself, or I will teach thee activity."

The boy, frightened at the violence of the soldier, rose to his feet, and dropping his instrument in alarm, clung to Abdalla. The wrath of the hot-tempered Salvatierra exceeded the bounds of decorum and of humanity. He had a twig in his hand, and with this he raised his arm to strike the unfortunate urchin. But just then the neophyte turned round, and beheld the act of tyranny.

"Señor !" he cried, with a voice even more harsh and angry than his own, and seizing the uplifted hand with no ceremonious grasp,—“Señor ! you will not so far forget your manhood as to do violence to the child ? Know that I have taken him, for this journey, into my protection ; know also, thou canst not inflict a stripe upon his feeble body, that will not degrade thee into the baseness of a hind, and that will not especially draw upon thee the inconvenience of mine own displeasure !”

The heart of Salvatierra sunk before the flaming countenance of the cavalier : but observing that several of his nearest followers had taken note of the insult, and were grasping their arms, as if to avenge it, he said with an air of firmness,

“The señor De Leste has twice or thrice taken occasion to requite my courtesies with such shame as is hard to be borne, and in particular by interfering with the just exercise of my authority ; and I have to assure him, that when the duties of my office shall release me from restraint, his injuries shall not be unremembered.”

“If thou art a hidalgo,” said the cavalier sternly, “thou hast the right to command me ; if of ignoble blood, as from thy deportment to this trembling child, I am constrained to believe, I have, nevertheless, eaten of thy bread and salt, and cannot refuse to meet thee with such weapons and in such way as thou mayest desire ; and to this obligation do I hold myself bound and fettered.”

Some half-dozen followers of the captain had crowded round their leader, and were lowering ominously and menacingly on the neophyte. Lazaro and Baltasar beheld the jeopardy of their master, and silently but resolutely placed themselves at his side ; nay, even the youthful Fabueno, though seemingly bewildered, as if doubting on which side to array himself, had snatched up his bloodless sabre ; and it seemed for an instant as if this unlucky rupture might end in blows. The señor Salvatierra looked

from his followers to the angry hidalgo ; the flush faded from his cheek ; and it was remarked by some of his soldiers, not a little to his dispraise, that when, as if conquering his passion, he motioned them to retire, it was with a hurried hand and tremulous lip.

"The señor de Leste is right," he said, with a disturbed voice ; "I should have done myself dishonour to harm the boy ; and although the reproof was none of the most gentle and honeyed, I can still thank him that it preserved me from the shame of giving too much rein to my ill-temper. I therefore forget the injury, as one that was merited, discharge my anger as causeless, and desiring rather to devote my blood to the subjugation of pagans, than to squander it in contest with a fellow-Christian, offer the hand of reconciliation and of friendship to Don Amador de Leste."

There was an appearance of magnanimity in this confession of fault and offer of composition, that won upon the good opinion of the neophyte ; and he frankly gave his hand to the captain. Then turning to the innocent cause of his trouble, who, during the time that there seemed danger of a conflict, had exhibited the greatest dismay, he found him sobbing bitterly in the arms of Abdalla.

"Poor child !" said the benevolent cavalier, "thou art fitter to touch thy lute in the bower of a lady, than to wake it among these wild and troubled deserts. It is enough, Abdalla : conduct thy son to some shade, where he may eat and sleep ; and when we renew our march, I will think of some device to spare his tender feet the pain of trudging longer over the sands."

The Moor laid his hand on his heart, bowed with the deepest submission and gratitude, and led the boy away to a covert.

CHAPTER VII.

"Didst thou observe, brother henchman," said Lazaro, as, after having completed his meal, and taken good note of the tethers of the horses, he threw himself on the ground by the side of Baltasar, as if to imitate the other members of the party, who were making what preparations they could for the indulgence of the siesta,—“Didst thou observe, I say, old sinner, that, this moment, we were like to have made experience of the virtue of cotton corslets? By my faith, this gentle master mine will not suffer our hands to be idle, so long as there be savages to curse the faith, or hidalgos to cross his humours. I am ever bound to the magnanimous señor commander, that he thought fit to swallow his wrath, and send me those black-browed vagabonds back to their dinner: for otherwise, I assure thee, there was much fear of our supping in purgatory.”

“For my part,” said Baltasar, raising his head from the saddle, which served him for a pillow, and looking curiously round on the various groups, “I am of opinion, there was more discretion than dignity about that same captain, when he became so moderate of a sudden; for so sure as he was very foolish to get into a quarrel with the boy Amador, who, I am free to say, is no way unworthy to be a kinsman and esquire of my master the knight, so surely would the boy have dinged the feathers off his gilt casque with the first blow; and how much of his head might have followed the feathers, is more than I will take upon me to determine.”

“Thou art so hungry after war,” said Lazaro, “thou canst not perceive the valour of foregoing an opportunity of battle now and then. Hast thou never seen a man turn pale from anger, as well as cowardice?”

“Of a truth, I have,” said the veteran; “and, pro-

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vided there be a steady countenance along with it, this sickly hue is ever a sight to be dreaded more than the woman's blush, which some men fall into in their anger. But a coward's mouth is always playing him dog's tricks: I have sometimes seen the nether lip shake in a brave man; but when the trembling is all up in the corners, as I have learned to know, after divers lessons, it is a sign the heart is in a flutter. There are doubtless certain strings, whereby the heart is fastened to the mouth; and it is when the corners are writhing about in this cowardly snaky manner, that the heart is drawn up further than is comfortable; a thing, as I have no doubt, may have sometimes happened to yourself."

"If it have, may I become a Turk's slave!" said Lazaro, with great indignation; "and if it do, I hope it may be transformed, at that moment, from my own mouth to a dog's, to be made a dinner of!"

"Thou art an ass to be in a passion, at any rate," said Baltasar, coolly, "and a very improbable idiot, to deny, in thy vain-glory, what has happened to braver men than thyself; and, which I am free to confess, has sometimes chanced to myself, especially in my youth, when I first went to fight the Moors; and, I very well remember, that besides perceiving there was a sort of emptiness under my ribs, on such occasions, I could feel my heart beating at the back of my throat as plainly as I ever felt the arrow-heads tapping about my buckler. But it always went to its place again, when we were come to close quarters."

"May I die of the bastinado, if I ever felt any such thing!" said Lazaro, proudly. "I was born without any such gaingiving; and the only uncomfortable feeling I have had, under such circumstances, was a sort of cold creeping about the stomach, as if it were raining inside of me."

"Or as if there was a cold air brewing in your gizzard!" said Baltasar, triumphantly. "That is the very same thing,—the emptiness, I was talking about; and if you never felt the beating in your throat, it

was because your heart was in such a fit of fright as to have no power of beating left."

"Ay! that may be," said Lazaro, with a grin: "that beating is a business I keep for my arm, and when that is in service, my heart is ever wise enough to be quiet. But concerning the captain,—Dost thou really esteem him a coward?"

"Who knows?" said the veteran. "A man may be once in fear, and strong-hearted ever after. Yet was there such a working about that cavalier's mouth, as made me think he longed to strike Don Amador, if he durst, and which still persuades he has some bitter thoughts about the matter of the insult: for, as you may remember, Don Amador said he was more of a hind than a hidalgo, with other such loving remarks as might stir a man's choler. For this reason, I am of opinion it will be good service of thee to thy master, to keep thine eyes open while he is taking his siesta, lest, mayhap, some mischief might come to him sleeping."

"I am ever bound to your goodnatured discretion," said Lazaro, with a laugh. "I have no doubt it would be more profitable to sit for an hour or two, watching the sunbeams stealing through the wood, than, for the same time, to slumber and snore, without any other amusement than an occasional buffeting of one's nose, to keep the flies off. I will therefore surrender this agreeable privilege to thyself, as being my senior and better; while I nap a little, and that so lightly, that if an emmet do but creep near my master, I shall hear the rustling of his footsteps. But hark'ee, Baltasar: there is much wit about thee, for an old man that has endured so many hard knocks; and ever, about once in an hundred times, I have found thy conjectures to be very reasonable. What is thy opinion concerning those infidel Moors under the bush yonder? and by what sort of magic dost thou suppose they have so wrought upon our commander, that he will neither suffer lance-shaft nor cane-twigg to be laid upon them?"

"Ay, there they are!" said Baltasar, looking towards the father and son. "The boy lies with his head on Abdalla's knee, and Abdalla covers him with his skin mantle; and the mantle shakes, as if the boy were sobbing under it.—It is my opinion, the lad has been used to milder treatment than he seems likely to meet in these parts, unless Don Amador should see fit to take him into his own keeping; and it is also my opinion, if he be so much affected at the sight of a green twig, he will go nigh to die of terror at the flash of a savage's sword."

"That is an opinion I have, in part, formed for myself," said the junior coolly: "and one that I think is shared in common with every other person in this quilted company, that has looked in the manikin's face."

"It is as white," said Baltasar, "as that mountain top we saw from the caravel; whereas the children of common Moriscos are much the hue of my own weather-beaten boots."

"The boy was in a most pestilent fright," said Lazaro, "and therefore somewhat more snowy than was natural; nevertheless, I have seen darker skins among the damsels of La Mancha."

"And he is, in a manner, well figured and comely," said the veteran.

"If thou hadst said he was such a Ganymede as might hold the wine-cup and trencher to a princess, I should have thought better of thine eye-sight. By cross and spear! he has such eyes as I shall be glad to find in any wench I may be predestined to marry."

"And his hand," said Baltasar, "is as small as a hidalgo's son's. He hath an amiable countenance, and such gravity in it, when not disturbed, as belongs to older years; and he ever keeps it bent to the earth, as if to shun observation."

"Ay; I see what thou art driving at," said Lazaro, significantly. "Thou thinkest Sidi Abdalla is some infidel prince of Granada—a Zegri or Abencerage—"

"I think no such thing," said Baltasar, gruffly. "I have fought, myself, hand to hand, with a Zegri, while my young lord Gabriel was cleaving the head of another; to which knightly and majestic infidels the wretch Sidi bears such resemblance as, in comparison, doth the hedge-hog to a leopard."

"Thou art of opinion then, doubtless," said Lazaro, "that the boy Jacinto is some Christian nobleman's son, stolen in his infancy by Sidi, to be made a sacrifice to the devil?"

"I am no such ass," said Baltasar, "to entertain any such notion."

"A bird's flight by his feather, a beast's rage by his claw, and a man's thoughts by his tongue," said Lazaro; "but how I am to judge thee, is more than I know. What a-God's name, dost thou think then of these Christian heathens?"

"I think nothing at all," said Baltasar, dryly: "I only wonder by what chance a Morisco boor came to have so tender and so handsome a boy."

"Well, heaven be with thee, old oracle," said Lazaro, laying his head on his saddle: "If I should resolve thy wonder in my dreams, I will enlighten thee when I wake."

The veteran gave a look to the horses,—to his master, who, by the attentions of the captain Salvatierra, had been enabled to enjoy the luxury of a hammock, slung between two trees,—to the Moor, who sat watching over his child,—to the Tlamémé, who slumbered by their packs,—to the Spaniards, who slept, as they had eaten, in groups,—to the few sentinels who stood nodding under the trees,—and then, dismissing all care, as if satisfied with the security of the motley encampment, he was not slow to follow the example of his companion.

CHAPTER VIII.

Two or three hours before sunset, the sleepers were roused to renew their march. Horses were saddled and armour buckled, and Don Amador de Leste mounted his steed with great satisfaction at the thought of still further diminishing the distance that separated him from his knight. As the train began to ford the rivulet, he turned round and beckoned to Abdoul, who, with Jacinto, had taken the station assigned them behind the musketeers.

"Sidi Abdalla," said he, "I have thought it a great shame that thy weary boy should trudge over these sands afoot, when such men as myself and my people are resting our lazy limbs on horseback. I have therefore given order to my soldier, Lazaro, to take the youth behind him; whereby much discomfort and suffering may be avoided."

"My lord will scorn the thanks of the poor Morisco," said Abdoul, humbly. "Sleep, and the food which it pleased my noble lord to give to the boy, have so refreshed his strength and his spirits, that now, in the pleasant evening air, he will journey without pain, as he has often, of yore, in the deserts of Barbary. And let not my lord be displeased to know, that Jacinto will be of better heart at the side of his father, than on the saddle of my lord's servant."

"If it be as thou sayest," said the cavalier, "I am content. Heaven forbid I should take him from thee, but for his good; which, doubtless, thou must know better how to compass than myself. Yet if he should at any time grow weary, make me acquainted with it, and Lazaro shall be still prepared to give him relief."

The Moor bent his head to the ground, and fell back; while Amador, followed by his attendants and the secretary, rode to the head of the train.

No occurrence of moment interrupted the monotony of the journey, until a thunderstorm, accompanied

by rain, drove them for shelter into a forest, where their march was interrupted for a time. But with a capriciousness equal to the fury with which they had gathered, the clouds parted and vanished in the sunbeams; the earth was gladdened; the trees shook the liquid treasure from their leaves; a breeze came from the distant surges; and, resuming their path, the train and cavalcade went on their way rejoicing.

As they advanced, and as the day declined, the country assumed a more agreeable aspect; the woods were thicker and more luxuriant; the mountains approached nearer to the sea, and the streams gambolled among piles of rocks, instead of creeping sluggishly through the sands; the flowers were more abundant, and the birds, resuming their songs, prepared their vespers for the sinking luminary. At last he set: the curlew wheeled his last flight; the plover sent his last whistle, from the air; and the stars, stealing out from the dusky arch, shed their celestial lustre over the path of the travellers. With these lamps of heaven, were also lit the torches of the *cucujos*,—those phosphorescent beetles, with which Don Amador had been made acquainted in the islands. But he did not the less admire the splendour of the spectacle, when he saw these resplendent insects glistening among the trees, or flashing by him like little meteors. The moon rose from the sea; and as her mellow radiance streamed over the tree tops, or sheeted itself on the sands, and as a thousand delicious scents came to the nostrils of the soldier, he thought he had never before, not even when watching the same planet in the calm bosom of the Levantine sea, looked upon a scene of more beautiful repose. The commander of the squadron had not, since the affair of the dinner, thought fit, frequently, to trouble Don Amador with his presence; but by the murmurs of satisfaction and curiosity which were breathed about him, the cavalier knew he was approaching the Indian city Zempoala. The party issued from the wood upon what seemed a fair waving

plain, dotted, in certain places, with clumps of trees, and doubtless, in other spots, enriched with plantations of maize and bananas. In the distance, from a dark and shadowy mass, which might have been a lofty grove or a low hillock, and whose gloom was alike broken by the glare of insects and the flash of many flambeaux, arose three lofty towers, square and white, and glittering in the moonbeams as if covered over with plates of silver.

"Zempoala!" whispered an hundred voices, as these gleaming fabrics came fairly into view. The languid horseman raised himself on his saddle; the foot-soldier strode onwards with a firmer and quicker step; and at each moment, as the three towers reflected the moonbeams with increasing brilliancy, more torches flickered and more structures were seen shining among the trees; and it was evident to Don Amador that he was approaching a city or town of no little magnitude.

The secretary had pressed to his side, and overhearing his exclamations of surprise, took the liberty of addressing him.

"Señor," he cried, "they say this pagan city is bigger and lovelier than Seville. I have often before heard of the Silver Towers; for truly, when the men of Cortes first saw them, they thought they were built of blocks of plate, and rode forward to hack away some samples with their swords; whereupon, to their great shame and disappointment, they discovered the brilliance to be owing to a certain white and polished plaster, with which these barbarians have the art to beautify their temples."

"Are these then the sanctuaries of the fiend?" said the neophyte, raising himself, and surveying the structures with a frown of infinite hostility: "It drives me to little esteem, to know that the señor Narvaez and his companions should rest in sight of these accursed places, without hurling them to the dust."

"They are no longer the houses of devils," said Lorenzo: "Cortes, the great rebel, tore the idols

from their altars, and putting an image of Our Blessed Lady in their place, consecrated them forthwith to the service of God."

"I hear nothing of Cortes, that does not convince me he is a truly noble and faithful cavalier," said Amador, with emphasis.

"There can be no doubt of that," said the secretary; "nevertheless, if I may presume to advise your favour, I would beseech you not to mention the name of Cortes among these men of Narvaez; or at least, not with the respect which you may think his due."

"Dost thou know," said Amador, addressing Fabueno so sternly, as to cause him instantly to repent his presumption: "dost thou know, that what thou art saying is of so base and boorish a spirit, that, if it be the true prompting of thy heart, thou art utterly unworthy to take upon thee the arms, as thou art wholly incapable of winning the fame, of a soldier? Know thou, for it is good thou shouldst be told, that all hypocrisy is the offspring of cowardice, and is therefore impossible to be practised by a brave man: know also, that when thou art deceiving man, thou art lying to God, which is an impiety not to be thought of by an honest man: and know, in conclusion, that when thou art called upon for thy opinion, if thou givest not that which is in thy heart, thou art guilty of that hypocrisy which is cowardice, and that deceit which is perjury."

"I beg your worship's pardon," said Lorenzo, abashed and confounded, and somewhat bewildered by the chivalrous and fastastic system of honour disclosed in the reproof of the cavalier. "I meant only to let your favour know, that there could be no travelling beyond this Indian city, without the good will of Narvaez and his officers, which might not be gained by commending their enemy. And moreover, señor, if you will suffer me to justify myself,—while I confess it would be both cowardly and impious, as your worship says, to conceal or alter a sentiment, when it is called for, yet was I thinking it

could be in no wise dishonourable to retain in our own mind opinions *not* called for, particularly when they might be disagreeable to those upon whom they were thus, as I may say, forced."

"By my faith, thou art, in a measure, very right," said Amador, "and I hereby recall any expressions which may have reflected on thy courage or thy religion; for, I perceive, thou wert only touching upon the obligation all men are under not to force their opinions upon others; an obligation of which I am myself so sensible, that, provided I am not called upon by the questions of these people, or the enforcements of mine own honour, I shall surely utter nothing to displease them. But canst thou tell me, señor secretario, how far from this town lies the commander, of whom we were speaking?"

"I have heard, only at the distance of two or three leagues," replied Fabueno; "but I should think, considering the wisdom of Cortes, he would be fain to increase that distance, as soon as he came to know the strength of Narvaez. Your favour may see, by the many torches glimmering through the streets, and the many voices that go chanting up and down, that there is a goodly multitude with him."

"I see, by the same tokens," said Amador, "he has a set of riotous, disorderly vagabonds, who seem to think they are keeping carnival in Christendom, rather than defending a camp among infidels: and, by St. John, I know not any very good reason, why the valiant Cortes might not, this instant, with his knot of brave men, steal upon the town, and snatch it out of the hands of the Biscayan. There is neither out-post in the field, nor sentinel in the suburbs!"

There seemed some grounds for this notion of the cavalier. As he approached nearer to Zempoala, there was audible a concert of sounds such as one would not have looked for in the camp of a good general. A great fire had been lit, as it appeared, among the Silver Towers, the ruddy reflection of which, mingled with the purer light of the moon, had

given them so shining an appearance, even at a distance. In this neighbourhood, as Amador judged by the direction and variety of cries, was the chief place of the revellers; though in divers quarters of the town might be heard the voices, and sometimes the musical instruments, of idle soldiers, struggling in rivalry with the ruder songs and harsher instruments of the natives. Besides the bonfires among the temples, there was another in the quarter of the town which the train was just entering, and apparently upon the very street which they were to pass. The cavalier had, however, underrated the vigilance of the sentinels; for, just as he had concluded his denunciation, the trumpet with which Salvatierra announced his approach to his companions, was answered by a flourish from the fire; and there was straightway seen a group of armed men advancing to challenge the party. In fact, an out-post was stationed at the fire; the worthy warriors of which, in the absence of any important duties, had got together the means of amusement in the persons of certain Indian tumblers and merry-andrews, who were diverting them with feats of agility. Besides these tawny sons of joyance, there were others of the same race, whose business it was to add to the pleasures of the entertainment the din of the musical instruments common to barbarians; only, as it seemed to Amador, that if there was nothing superior in the tone or management of these which he now heard, they had an advantage over those of the islanders, in being wrought with greater skill and ornamented with a more refined taste. Thus, of the little drums which were suspended to the necks of the musicians, and which were at least equal in sound to the tabours of Europe, some were carved and painted in a very gay manner; while the flutes of cane, though not less monotonous than the pipes of other savages, had about them an air of elegance, from being furnished with pendants of rich flowers, or beautiful feathers.

As Amador rode by, his attention was in a mea-

sure diverted from the tumblers by the agitation of Fogoso, who regarded neither the great fire nor the wild looking artists with friendship; and when, having subdued his alarm, he turned to gratify his wonder, his eye was caught by the appearance of the Moor, who had stolen to his side, and now stood with a countenance even more disturbed than when shrinking from the blow of Salvatierra, and with hands upraised and clasped, as if to beseech his notice.

"My lord is benevolent to the friendless, and pitiful to the orphan," he cried anxiously, as soon as he perceived that Amador regarded him; "he has been the champion of the father, and the protector of the son; and when the heart's blood of Abdoul can requite his benefactor, Abdoul will not deny it."

"Good Sidi," said Amador, "that I have protected both yourself and your son Jacinto, from unjust violence, is more than can be denied; but why it is needful to thank me so many times for the favour, is more than I can easily understand. I must therefore command you to find some more novel subject for conversation."

"My lord is a knight of Rhodes," said Abdalla quickly," and therefore by vow bound to charity, justice, pity, and all the other good virtues acknowledged as well by infidels as Christians?"

"I am no knight; a novice of the order I may be called," said Amador, "but no knight; though," he added with a most dolorous sigh, "how soon I may take the vows after returning from the lands of Mexico, is more than I can pronounce. I have therefore not bound myself by oath to any of those virtues of which you spoke; but had you been born of a nobler blood than I can account that of the lord of Fez, you should have known, that, being a gentleman and a Christian, I cannot release myself from any of their natural obligations."

"For myself," said Abdalla, "though insult and danger will come to me among these riotous soldiers, who are the enemies of my race, and these barba-

rians, who are surely the enemies of all, I can submit to my griefs; but Jacinto needs the arm of power to protect him. If my lord will take him to be his servant, he will be merciful to misfortune; the prayers of gratitude will ascend to heaven; and the love of a faithful boy will watch ever at his side like the vigilance of an armed follower."

"Art thou content the boy should be parted from thee?" demanded Amador. "I know not how, among these strange lands and unknown wildernesses, I may be able to take that care of his tender years which should be the duty of a good master; nor, to tell thee the truth, do I know in what manner I can make use of his services."—

"Let not my lord despise his skill," said the Almogavar, "because his fright and weariness palsied his hand, when he should have played before him. He hath good skill with the lute, and he has in his memory a thousand redondillas, with which he may divert the leisure of my lord. Besides this skill, he hath a fidelity which nothing can corrupt, and a loving heart which, once gained by kindness, no temptation can lure from his master: and in these qualities will I vouch for him with my head. I know not in truth," continued Abdalla, faltering, "since he has never before served a master, if he have any other qualifications. But he is quick to acquire, and perhaps—perhaps, he may soon learn to preserve the armour of my lord—yes, he will soon make himself useful to my lord."

"The cleaning of my armour," said Amador, in a very matter-of-fact manner, "is a duty which belongs particularly to Lazaro; whose fidelity, as well as that of Baltasar, is of so unquestionable a character, that it fully meets all the exigencies of my course of life. I would therefore receive thy son chiefly out of a hope to be comforted, at times, with his music; and partly out of pity for his forlornness. He will doubtless serve me as a page and cup-bearer; in which capacity, promising to give him as much protection

and kindness as may be in my power, I consent to receive him."

"And my lord will permit that I shall often see him?" said Abdoul, eagerly.

"Surely I must desire thou shouldst," said Amador, "if it were possible thou couldst be in the same army."

Abdalla looked at the cavalier with a bewildered and confused countenance, as if not understanding him.

"I must acquaint thee, good Sidi," said Amador, "with one fact, of which thou seemest ignorant, and which may wholly change thy desires in this matter. Thy destination is to this town of Zempoala, and mine to the very far city Tenochtitlan; thy fate is to submit thee into the hands of the general Narvaez, as thou hast heard, to serve him as a cannonier, while mine is to betake myself to the general Cortes, his sworn and most indomitable enemy. Thou mayest therefore inquire of thyself, if thy boy go with me, whether thou wilt ever again look upon him; a question that I cannot myself answer in a satisfactory manner. Make thy election, therefore, whether thou wilt keep him at thy side, or entrust him to my guardianship; being assured, that if the latter be thy desire, I will bid thee call him, and straightway take him into my keeping."

"It cannot be!" said Abdalla, vehemently;—"I cannot trust him from my sight: it cannot be! God is just; and justice may come with misery!"

Thus lamenting, Abdoul al Sidi retired from the side of the cavalier; and Amador, whose pity was not a little touched, suffered his image to be crowded from his mind by the new and strange spectacles which were now opening upon him.

CHAPTER IX.

WHILE he still talked with the Morisco, Don Amador was able to cast his eyes about him, and to perceive on either side a great multitude of low houses of wickered cane, which seemed to him more to resemble gigantic baskets than the habitations of men; but which, even in these latter days, are found sufficient to protect the humble aborigines from the vicissitudes of that benignant clime. Each stood by itself in an enclosure of shrubs and flowers, and where it happened that the inmates were within, with torches or fires burning, the blaze, streaming through the wattled walls, illuminated every thing around, and disclosed the figures of the habitants moving about like shadows in the flame. Other buildings, equally humble in size, were constructed of less remarkable but not less romantic materials; and where the moonbeams fell over their earthen walls and palmy roofs, both were often concealed by such a drapery of vines and creeping flowers, perhaps the odoriferous vanilla and the beautiful convolvulus, as might have satisfied the longings of a wood-nymph. As he approached nearer to the centre of the town, these lowly and lovely cottages were exchanged for fabrics of stone, many of them of considerable size, and several with walls covered with the bright and silvery plaster which ornamented the temples. Each of these, the dwellings of the *Tlatoani*, or, as the Spaniards called them, in the language of Santo Domingo, the *Caciques* of the city,—stood alone in its garden of flowers, with vines trailing, and palm-trees bending over its roof, commonly in darkness, though sometimes the myrtle-taper of a fair Totonac, (for such was the name of this provincial people of the coast,) or the oily cresset of a Spanish captain, who had made his quarters wherever was a house to his fancy, might be seen gleaming from behind the cur-

tains of cotton stuff, which were hung at the doors and windows. These sights had been seen by Amador, while yet engaged in conversation with Abdalla; but when the Morisco dropped sorrowfully away, he found himself on the great square of the city, immediately fronting the sanctuaries, and gazing upon a scene of peculiarly wild and novel character. The centre of the square was occupied by a broad, and indeed a vast platform of earth, raised to a height of eight or ten feet, ascended from all sides by half as many steps,—having the appearance of a low truncated pyramid, serving as a base to the three towers which crowned it. Upon its summit or terrace, immediately in advance of the towers, was kindled a great fire, the blaze of which, besides illuminating the temple itself and all the buildings which surrounded the square, fell upon sundry groups of Indian tumblers, engaged in feats of activity, as well as upon a host of cavaliers who surveyed them close at hand, and many throngs of common soldiers and natives who looked on at a distance from the square.

Here the detachment was halted; the burthens of the Tlamémé were deposited on the earth; the horses were freed from their packs; and Amador, at the suggestion of Salvatierra, dismounted, and leaving Fogoso to the care of his attendants, and these again to the disposition of the captain, ascended the pyramid, followed by the secretary. He was somewhat surprised, when this worthy commander, whom he looked for to conduct him to the general, resuming much of the stately dignity he had found it inconvenient to support on the march, made him a low bow, and informed him with much gravity he would find the commander-in-chief either on the terrace among his officers, or at his head-quarters in the middle tower. The feeling of indignation which for a moment beset him, would have been expressed, had not Salvatierra with another bow retired, and had he not perceived, at the same moment, the young Fabuena draw from his girdle the letter which was

doubtless to secure him the good-will of Narvaez. Checking therefore his anger, he straightway ascended the platform. Arrived at its summit, he now beheld the scene which he had imperfectly witnessed from below. The great fire, crackling and roaring, added the ruddy glare of a volcano to the pallid illumination of the moon; and in the combined light, the operations of the gymnasts and dancers, the athletes and jugglers, were as visible as if performed in the glitter of noon-day. For a moment Amador thought, as had been thought by all other Spaniards, when looking for the first time on the sports of these barbarous races, that he had got among a group of devils, or at least of devilish magicians; and he crossed himself with an instinctive horror, when he beheld, so to speak, three piles of men, each composed of three individuals, half-naked, standing one upon the head or shoulders of another, whirling about in a circle, and each, as he whirled, dancing on the head or shoulders of his supporter, and tossing abroad his *penacho*, or long plume of feathers, as if diverting himself on the solid earth. This spectacle entirely distracted his attention from others scarcely less worthy of observation,—as was indeed that, where two men see-sawed on a pole, in the air, and, as might be said, without support, except that which was occasionally rendered by the feet of a sinewy pagan, who lay on his back, and ever and anon, as the flying phantoms descended, spurned them again into the air. Such also was that magical dance of the cords, brought from the unknown tribes of the South, wherein a score of men, each holding to a rope of some brilliant colour, and each decorated with the feathers of the parrot and the flamingo, whirled in fleet gyrations round a garlanded post, till their cords were twisted together in a net of incomprehensible complexity, but which, before the observer had leisure to digest his amazement, were again unravelled in the rapid and mysterious evolutions of the dance. A thousand other such exhibi-

tions, similar in novelty but different in character, were displayed at the same moment; but the eyes of the neophyte were lost to all but that which had first astounded him; and it was not till the voice of the secretary roused him from his bewitchment, that he collected his senses, and observed an officer of the household of the general standing before him, and doing him such reverence as was evidently the right of his dignity. It was then that Don Amador looked from the dancers to the cavaliers whom they were diverting. The fire flashed over the walls of the square and lofty towers up to the shelving thatch of palm-leaves, under which they were grouped, making, with the glitter of their half-armed persons, a suitable addition to the romance of the scene. In the centre of that group which lounged before the middle and loftiest tower, in a chair, or indeed, as it might be called, a throne, of such barbaric beauty as was known only to the magnificos of this singular people, sat a cavalier, tall and somewhat majestic of stature, with a ruddy beard, and yellow locks falling over an agreeable countenance; in whom, not so much from the character of his deportment and the quality of his decorations, as from the evident homage rendered him by the officers around, Don Amador did not doubt he beheld the Biscayan general. At the very moment when his eyes fell upon this smiling dignitary, he was himself perceived by the general; and Narvaez started up with a sort of confusion, as if ashamed to be discovered in such trivial enjoyment by so gallant a cavalier. In fact, the glittering casque of steel had supplanted the velvet cap on the head of the novice; and as he approached in full armour, clad also in the dignity with which he was wont to approach his fellows in rank, Don Amador presented a figure, to say the least, equally noble with that of the commander,—and, what was no slight advantage in those days, with the additional manifestation of high blood, such as was *certainly* less questionable in him than in Narvaez.

It seemed for a moment, as if the general would have retreated into the temple, doubtless with the view of assuming a more stately character for the interview; but perceiving that Don Amador had already recognised him, and was advancing, he changed his purpose, and making a step forward to do honour to his visiter, he stood still to receive him. The eyes of all those gallant adventurers were turned from the dancers to the new-comer; but Don Amador, not much moved by such a circumstance, as indifferent to their curiosity as their admiration, approached with a stately gravity, and, making a courteous reverence to the general, said,—

“I have no doubt it is my felicity at this present moment to offer my devoirs to the noble and very respected señor, the general Don Panfilo de Narvaez; on the presumption of which, I, Amador de Leste, of Cuenza, a novice of the holy hospital of St. John of Jerusalem, do not hesitate to claim the hospitalities, which, as an hidalgo of Spain, and kinsman of the noble señor, the admiral Cavallero, your excellency’s confederate, I hold myself entitled to expect.”

“The very noble and valiant señor Don Amador de Leste shall not claim those hospitalities in vain,” said the general, with a voice whose natural and voluminous harshness did not conceal an attempt at amenity; “and I hope he will not anticipate in them too little of the roughness of a soldier, by reason that he has seen us unbending a little from the toils of war to the foolish diversions of these ingenious barbarians.”

“I will not take upon me to judge either of the tactics or the recreations of your excellency,” said Amador, very coolly. “I will only demand of your favour to accept, at this present moment, such protestations of respect as become me in my function of suitor; and, in especial, to accredit my companion, the secretary Fabueno, the messenger of the admiral, who is charged with certain letters to your excellency, of which, I believe, I am myself, in part, the subject.”

"I receive them with respect, and I welcome the very distinguished Don Amador with much joy," said Narvaez; "in token of which I must beg him to allow himself to be considered, at least so long as he honours my command with his presence, as my own peculiar guest: and that I may the sooner know in what it may be my happiness to do him service, I must entreat him to enter with me into my poor quarters."

With such superb expressions of etiquette, the common compliments of an over-chivalrous age and people, Don Amador was ushered into the interior of the temple. A curtain of a certain strong and checkered matting, that served the purpose of a door, was pushed aside, and, entering with the general and two or three of his most favoured officers, he found himself in the heathen sanctuary. A table covered with brilliant drapery of cotton—a product of the country—and strewn over with pieces of armour, as well as with divers vessels wherein glowed some of the rich wines ripened by the breath of the Solano, contained also a great silver cresset filled with oil tempered with liquidambar, which, besides pervading the whole atmosphere with a delicious odour, shed abroad such a light as enabled Don Amador to survey the apartment. It was of good height, and spacious: the walls were hung with arras of a sombre-hued cotton, and the floor covered with thick matting. In one corner was a ladder, leading to the upper chambers. Two sides of it were occupied by a low platform, on which lay several mattresses stuffed with the down of the ceiba; over one of which, on a small altar of wood, illuminated by tapers of the myrtle wax, was a little image of the Virgin. In this chamber, the chief adulatory of the temple, where now flashed the weapons of the iconoclasts, stood once the altar of an idol, whose fiendish lips had been often died with the blood of human sacrifices. There were rude chairs about the table; and Amador, at the invitation of the general, did not hesitate to seat *himself*, and cast an eye of observation on his com-

panions, while Narvaez, with the assistance of the secretary, proceeded to decipher the advices of the admiral.

The individuals with whom Amador found himself in contact, were of a genteel and manly presence: and though evidently burning with desire to make the acquaintance of the novice of Rhodes, and certainly also with curiosity to know what strange event had cast him among themselves, had yet sufficient breeding to conceal their anxieties,—excepting one, who, although of riper years than the rest, and even of more gravity of deportment, was nevertheless twice or thrice guilty of a very inquisitive stare. This Don Amador did himself at last perceive, and felt greatly moved to discover the cause of so remarkable a scrutiny. Nevertheless, before he had resolved in what manner to commence the investigation, and before the general had well looked into the advices of the admiral, they were both interrupted in their purpose by the abrupt intrusion of an officer, who, approaching Narvaez, said something to him in a low voice, of which all that Amador could distinguish were the words, twice or thrice repeated, of *nigromante* and *astrologo*. The officer received a direction equally obscure with his information; and Amador observed that as Narvaez gave it, his face flushed over with some sudden excitement. The speculations of the neophyte were soon terminated. Before the curtain had yet closed upon the retreating officer, the cavalier whose curious looks had attracted his own attention, rose and addressed the general.

“Señor general and governor,” he cried, “I doubt whether this knavish impostor be worthy your attention. He is accounted both a liar and traitor, and he can tell us nothing that will not be spoken to deceive us.”

“The señor Don Andres de Duero cannot be better persuaded of the man’s character than myself,” said the general; “and he will not assure me that a good general can refuse to listen to any intelligence of his

enemy, though it be brought by a traitor.—The noble Don Amador de Leste will pardon me, if I make so free with him, as in his presence to introduce and examine a prisoner, or deserter, I know not which, on matters which it concerns me as a commander to know. And moreover," continued the Biscayan, with a laugh, "I know not what better diversion I can give my guest, than to make him acquainted with a man who pretends to read the mysteries of the stars by night, and to have a devil who gives him knowledge of men's destinies by daylight."

Before Amador could reply to this appeal, the señor Duero spoke again.

"Surely he can bring us no information of Cortes which we have not received at better hands; and as for his magical art, I think your excellency holds that in too much doubt and contempt to set much store by its crazy revelations."

"What may be my doubt, and what my contempt for his art," said the general, "is more than I have yet resolved: only there is one thing of which I am quite certain, and that is, that, with the blessing of Our Holy and Immaculate Lady, I defy the devil and all his imps, whether they come at the bidding of a heathenish magician or a Christian enchanter; and, moreover, that if there be any knowledge to be gained of the devil, without jeopardy of soul, one is a fool not to receive it. Señor," continued Narvaez, addressing himself again to Amador, "I may as well tell you, that the magician Botello, whom you will presently behold, is a favourite soldier and chief enchanter to that infidel rebel, Cortes, (whom God confound, with all his mutinous friends and upholders, high and low, strong and feeble, Amen!)—I say, señor, his chief magician," continued the general, speaking so rapidly and impetuously, as utterly to prevent Don Amador from making the amendment he meditated to the curse, and insisting that Narvaez should revoke it, as far at least as it concerned his kinsman, the knight,—“his chief magician, by whose aid, it is

supposed, the runagate desperado has been enabled to imprison the Indian emperor. And, knave or not, Don Amador, it cannot be denied, that when struck down, after surrendering himself, this morning, by the currish soldier, Caboban, he cursed the smiter with 'a short life and a long death;' which curse was fulfilled upon him on the instant; for striking Botello with his spear again, his horse plunged, threw him violently, and, falling, he was instantly spitted on the spear of a footman. He has been dying ever since; and sometime, doubtless, his agony will be over; but he is as good as a dead man now."

"I am by no means certain," said Don Amador, "that there was any connexion between the curse of the magician and the calamity of the soldier; though, as it appears to me, heaven could not visit with judgment any one more righteously than the dastard who strikes an enemy after he has rendered himself a captive. Nevertheless, and though I am somewhat impatient your excellency should determine upon my own affairs, I have such respect for the superior claims of your duties, that I will willingly defer my anxiety until your excellency has examined the prisoner."

There were several very meaning glances exchanged among the cavaliers at this speech, which seemed to imply a feeling of neglect and resentment on the part of the speaker; but Narvaez did not notice it, or if he did, the impression was immediately driven from his mind by the entrance of the enchant-er, conducted by several soldiers and officers, among whom was the captain Salvatierra.

CHAPTER X.

AMADOR surveyed the prisoner, though somewhat indifferently. He was, in figure and age, very much such a man as Baltasar, but in other respects very dissimilar. His face was wan, and even cadaverous; but this might have been the effect of the blows he had received from the dying soldier, as was made probable by the presence of several spots of blood encrusted over his visage. His cheeks were broad, and the bones prominent; his eyes very hollow, and expressive of a wild solemnity, mingled with cunning; his beard long and bushy, and only slightly grizzled, and a rugged mustache hung over his lips so as almost to conceal them. His apparel was of black cloth, none of the freshest, the principal garment of which was a long loose doublet, under which was buckled an iron breast-plate,—his only armour; for, instead of a morion, he wore a cloth hat of capacious brim, stuck round with the feathers of divers birds, as well as several medals of the saints, rudely executed in silver. Besides these fantastic decorations, he had suspended to his neck several instruments of the Cabala,—a pentacle of silver, and charms and talismans written over with mystical characters, as well as a little leathern pouch filled with various dried herbs and roots. This mystagogue, an agent of no little importance among many of the scenes of the Conquest, was led into the presence of the general, and approached him without betraying any signs of fear or embarrassment; nor, on the other hand, did he manifest any thing like audacity or presumption; but lifting his eyes to the visage of the Biscayan, he gazed upon him with a silent and grave earnestness, that seemed somewhat to disconcert the leader.

“Sirrah sorcerer,” said he, “since the devil has *deserted* you at last, call up what spirits you can

muster, and find me why I shall not hang you for a spy, early in the morning."

"*Tetragrammaton Adonai!*" muttered the warrior-magician in the holy gibberish of his art, with a voice of sepulchral hollowness, and with a countenance gleaming with indignation or enthusiasm. "In the name of God, Amen! I defy the devil, and am the servant of his enemy; and in the land of devils, of Apollyon in the air, Beelzebub on the earth, and Satan in men's hearts, I forswear and defy, condemn and denounce them; and I pray for, and foresee, the day when they shall tumble from the high places!"

"All this thou mayst do, and all this thou mayst foresee," said the general; "but nevertheless thy wisdom will be more apparent to employ itself a little in the investigation of thine own fate; which, I promise thee, is approaching to a crisis."

"I have read it in the stars, I have seen it in the smoke of waters and of blessed herbs, and I have heard it from the lips of dead men and the tongues of dreams," cried the professor of the occult sciences, with much emphasis. "But what is the fate of Bortello, the swordsman, to that of the leaders of men, the conquerors of kings and great nations? I have read my own destinies; but why shouldst thou trifle the time to know them, when I can show thee the higher mysteries of thine own?"

"Canst thou do so? By my faith then, I will have thee speak them very soon," said Narvaez. "But first, let me know what wert thou doing when thou wert found prowling this morning so near to my camp?"

"Gathering the herbs for the suffumigation which shall tell me in what part of the world thou shalt lay thy bones!" said the magician, solemnly. "The moon, in the house Alchil, showed me many things, but not all; a thick smoke came over the crystal, and I saw not what I wanted; I slept under the cross, with a skull on my bosom, but it breathed nothing but clouds. Wherefore I knew, it should be only

when the wolf spoke to the vulture, and the vulture to the red star, that Camael the angel should unlock the lips of destiny, and lead me whither I longed to follow."

"I am ever bound to thee," said the general, with a manner in which an attempt at mockery was mingled with a natural touch of superstition, "for the extreme interest thou seemest to cherish in my fate; and again I say to thee, I will immediately converse with thee on that subject. But at present, senior nigromante, I warn thee, it will be but wisdom, to confine thy rhapsodies within the limits of answers to such interrogatories as I shall propose thee.—Where lies thy master, the outcast and arch-rebel, my enemy?"

"My master is in heaven!" said Botello, with a devout and lofty earnestness, "and there is no outcast and rebel but he that dwelleth in the pit, under the foot of Michael; and he is the enemy!"

"Sirrah! I speak to thee of the knave Cortes," cried the general, angrily. "When wert thou last at his side? and where?"

"At midnight,—on the river of Canoes, where he has rested, as thou knowest, for a night and a day."

"Ay!" said the Biscayan fiercely; "within a league of my head-quarters, whither my clemency has suffered him to come."

"Whither God and his good star have drawn him," said the magician.

"And whence I will drive him to the rocks of the mountains, or the mangroves of the beach, ere thou art cured of thy wounds!"

"Lo! my wounds are healed!" said Botello; "the hand that inflicted them is stiff and cold, and Hernan Cortes yet lies by the river! Ay, the holy unguent, blessed of the fat of a pagan's heart, hath dried the blood and glued the skin; and yet my captain, whose fate I have seen and spoken, even from the glory of noon to the long and sorrowful shadows of the evening, marshals his band within the sound of thy matin

bell ; and wo be to his foeman, when he is nearer or further !”

“Prattling fool,” said the commander, “if thou hadst looked to the bright moon to-night, thou wouldst have seen how soon the cotton-trees of the river should be strung with thy leader and companions, and with thyself, as a liar and an impostor, in their midst !”

“I looked,” said the veteran, tranquilly, “and saw what will be seen, but not by *all*. There was thunder in the temple, and peace by the river, and more wailing than comes from the lips of the Penitent Knight.”

The angry impetuosity with which Narvaez was about to continue the conference, was interrupted by the impatience of the novice. He had listened with much disgust both to the mystic jargon of the soldier and the idle demands and bravadoes of the general. The interest with which he discovered how short a distance separated him from his kinsman, was increased to an irresistible excitement, when he heard the title with which, as the admiral had told him, the knight was distinguished among the invaders, on the lips of Botello. Rising therefore abruptly, he said,

“Señor Narvaez, I have to beg your pardon, if, in my own impatience to be satisfied in a matter which I have much at heart, I am somewhat blind to the importance of this present controversy. If your excellency will do me the favour to examine the letters of the admiral, you will discover that it is not so much my purpose to lay claim to your hospitable entertainment, the proffer of which I acknowledge with much gratitude, as to request your permission to pass through the lines of your army, to join my kinsman the knight Calavar. Understanding, therefore, from the words of this lunatic, or enchanter, whichever he may be, that I am within the short distance of a league from my good knight, to whom all my allegiance is due, I see not wherefore I should not proceed to join him forthwith, instead of wasting the

night in slumber. I must, therefore, crave of your excellency to grant me, to the camp of the señor Cortes, a guide, to whom I will, with my life and honour, guarantee a safe return;—or such instructions concerning my route, as will enable me to proceed alone—that is to say, with my attendants.”

The effect of this interruption and unexpected demand, on the countenances of all, was remarkable enough. The cavaliers present stared at the novice with amazement, and even a sort of dismay; and the secretary Fabueno, looking by chance at the captain Salvatierra, observed the visage of this worthy suddenly illuminated by a grin of delight. As for the general himself, nothing could be more unfeigned than his surprise, nothing more unquestionable than the displeasure which instantly began to darken his visage. He rose, thrust his hand into his belt, as if to give his fingers something to gripe, and drawing himself to his full height, said haughtily and severely,

“When I invited the cavalier De Leste to share the shelter of this temple, I did not think I received a friend of the traitor Cortes or of any of his people; nor did I dream an adherent of this outlaw would dare to beard me at my head-quarters with so rash and audacious a request!”

“The señor Narvaez has then to learn,” said Amador, with a degree of moderation that could only be produced by a remembrance of his engagement to the admiral, and his promise to the secretary, not causelessly to provoke the anger of the general,—but nevertheless with unchanging decision, “that if I boast not to be the friend of Cortes, whom you call a traitor, I avouch myself to be very much the creature of mine own will; and that if I cannot be termed the adherent of an outlaw, I am at least a Spanish hidalgo, bent on the prosecution of my designs, and making requests more as the ceremonies of courtesy, than the tribute of humility. I will claim nothing *more* of your excellency than your excellency is, *without claim*, inclined to grant; and allowing there-

fore that you invited me to your lodgings under a mistaken apprehension of my character, I will straightway release you from the obligation, only previously desiring of your excellency to reconsider your expressions, wherein, as I think, was an innuendo highly unjust and offensive."

"Now, by heaven!" exclaimed the Biscayan, with all the irascibility of his race, and the arrogant pride of his station, "I have happened upon a strange day, when a vagabond esquire, wandering through my jurisdiction, asks my permission to throw himself into the arms of my enemy; and when I admonish him a little of his rashness, rebukes me with insult and defiance!"

"A very strange day indeed!" muttered a voice among the cavaliers, in which Amador, had he not been too much occupied with other considerations, might have recognized the tones of Salvatierra.

"Biscayan!" said he, with an eye of fire, "I have given you all the respect, which, as a governor's governor, and a captain's captain, you had a right to demand; I have also done you the homage of a guest to his host, and of a gentleman to a reputed hidalgo; but neither as a governor nor commander, neither as a host nor a nobleman, have you the privilege to offend with impunity, or to insult without being called to a reckoning."

"Is this another madman of the stock of Calavar, that the silly admiral hath sent me?" cried the infuriated leader, snatching up a sword from the table, and advancing upon the novice.

"Señor Panfilo!" cried Amador, confronting the general, and waving his hand with dignity, "unless thou force me by thine own violence, I cannot draw my sword upon thee on thine own floor, not even although thou add to thy wrongs a sarcasm on my knight and kinsman. Nevertheless I fling this glove at thy feet, in token that if thou art as valiant as thou art ill-bred, as ready to repair as to inflict an injury, I will claim of thee, as soon as may suit thy

convenience, to meet me with weapons, and to answer thy manifold indignities."

"*Dios santísimo!*" cried the commander, foaming with rage and stamping furiously on the floor. "What ho! swords and pikemen! shall I strike this *galofero* braggart with my own hands? Arrest him!"

"The blood of him that stays me, be on his own head!" said Amador, drawing his sword and striding to the entrance. "I will remember thee, uncourteous cavalier, when I see thee in a fitter place."

The arm of the governor had been arrested by Duero; and in the confusion of the moment, though the door of the tower was instantly beset by a dozen gaping attendants, Don Amador would doubtless have passed through them without detention, notwithstanding the furious commands of Narvaez. But at the moment, when, as he waved his sword menacingly, the hesitating satellites seemed parting before him, Salvatierra stepped nimbly behind, and suddenly seizing his outstretched arm, and calling to the guards at the same time, in an instant Don Amador was disarmed and a prisoner. His rage was for a moment unspeakable; but it did not render him incapable of observing the faithful boldness of the secretary.

"Señor general!" cried Lorenzo, though with a stammering voice, "if your excellency will read this letter to the end, your excellency will find my master recommends Don Amador as of a most noble and lofty family, and, at this moment, raised above arrest and detention, by being charged with authority from the Grand Master of Rhodes."

The only answer of the general was a scowl and a wave of the hand, which instantly left Fabueno in the predicament of the cavalier. He was seized, and before he could follow the example of his patron, and draw his sabre, it was snatched from his inexperienced hand.

All this passed in a moment; and before the neophyte could give utterance to the indignation which choked him, he was dragged, with Fabueno, from the quarry.

CHAPTER XL

THE dancers had fled from the terrace; the fire had smouldered away; but in the light of the moon, which shed a far lovelier radiance, Don Amador, as he was hurried to the steps, saw in place of the gay cavaliers, a few sentries striding in front of the towers, and among the artillery which frowned on either edge of the platform. Nevertheless, if his rage had left him inquisitive, he was not allowed time to indulge his observations. He was hurried down the steps, carried a few paces further, and instantly immured in the stone dwelling of some native chief, which, by the substitution of a door of plank for the cotton curtain, and other simple contrivances, had been easily converted into a prison.

In the meanwhile, the rage of the governor burned with a fury that was not much lessened by the remonstrances of his officers; and to the counsel of Duero,—the personal secretary of Don Diego Velasquez, accompanying the expedition less as an adviser than as a spy over the general, and therefore necessarily held in some respect,—he answered only with heat and sarcasm.

“I have ever found the señor Don Andres,” he cried, without regarding the presence of Botello, “to be more friendly with the friends of Cortes than may seem fitting in the honourable and confidential secretary of Velasquez!”

“I will not deny that such is my temper,” said Duero; “nor will I conceal from you that such leniency springs less from affection than interest. Sure am I, that had your excellency, from the first, held out the arms of conciliation, instead of the banners of vengeance, at this moment, instead of being arrayed against you in desperate hostility, the forces of Cortes would have been found enrolled under your

own standard, and Cortes himself among the humblest and faithfullest of your captains."

"While I doubt that effect," said the general sharply, "I cannot but be assured of the strength of Don Andres's interest, while I listen to the whispers of his enemies."

Duero coloured, but replied calmly :

"It is not unknown to me, that certain ill-advised persons have charged me with being under the influence of a secret compact with Cortes, formed before his appointment to the command of the first army of invasion; whereby I was to share a full third of the profits of his enterprise. Without pretending to show the improbability of such an agreement, I will, for an instant, allow your excellency to take it for granted, in order that your excellency may give me credit for my present disinterestedness, in doing all I can to ruin my colleague; in which I reckon, as no slight matter, taking every opportunity to decoy away his followers."

"If thou wilt show me in what manner submission to the whims and insults of this insolent boy could have detached any of the mutineers from Cortes, I will confess myself in error, and liberate him forthwith," said the general.

"The insult has been passed, the blow has been struck," said Duero gravely, "and unless your excellency chooses to measure swords with him immediately after his liberation, nothing can be gained by such a step. I should rather counsel your excellency to have the prison watched with a double guard. But, in arresting him, you have, besides giving deep offence to your colleague, the admiral, for ever won the hate and hostility of the knight of Rhodes; and when this is told him in the camp of Cortes, it will harden the hearts of all against us."

"When it is told in the camp of Cortes," said Narvaez, with a bitter smile, "it shall be with mine own lips; and if I hang not upon a tree, afterwards, the knight Calavar himself, it will be more out of regard

to his madness, than to the dignity of his knighthood. I will attack the rebel to-morrow !”

“Your excellency is heated by anger,” said Duero temperately ; “or you would observe you have a follower of the rebel for a listener.”

“Ay ! Botello !” cried the general, with a laugh of scorn. “He will carry my counsels to Cortes when the cony carries food to the serpent, and the sick ox to the carrion crow. Hark, sirrah,—thou hast read the fate of thy master : will I attack him to-morrow ?”

“Thou wilt not,” said Botello, with an unmoved countenance.

“Hah !” cried Narvaez ; “art thou so sure of this that thou wilt pledge thy head on the prophecy ? Thou shalt live to be hanged at sunset, with thy old comrades for spectators.”

“Heaven has written another history for to-morrow,” said Botello, gravely ; “and I have read that as closely as the page of to-day ; but what is for myself, is, and no man may know it : The fate in store for the vain pride and the quick anger, may, in part, be spoken.”

“Sirrah,” said Narvaez, “remember, that though the vain pride might overlook one so contemptible as thyself, the quick anger is not yet allayed ; and if thou wilt not have me beat thee in the morning, proceed forthwith to discourse of our destinies.”

“Blows shall be struck,” said the magician, earnestly ; “but whether upon my own head or another’s, whether in this temple or another place, whether in the morning or the evening, I am not permitted to divulge. Repent of thy sins ; call in a confessor, and pray ; for wrath cometh, and sorrow is behind ! By the spirits that live in the stars, by the elves that dwell in stones and shrubs, by the virtues that are caged in matter where the ignorant man findeth naught but ignorance, have I been made acquainted with many things appertaining to thy fate, but not all. If thou wilt, I will speak thee the things I am permitted.”

"Speak then," cried the general; "for whether thy knowledge be truth or lies, whether it come from the revelations of angels, or the diabolical instructions of fiends, I will listen without fear."

"*Adonai Melech!* under the heaven, and above the abyss,—with my hand on the cross, and the rosary in my bosom,—in Rome, near to the footsteps of his holiness, and with one who was his favourite astrologer, studied I mine art; and there is nothing in it that is not blessed," said Botello, with a solemn enthusiasm, that made a deep impression upon all.—"Give me a staff, that I may draw the curtain from this loop," he continued.

The sword of a younger officer was instantly extended, the curtain removed, and the moon, climbing the blue hills of paradise, looked down into the apartment. The cavaliers stared at the astrologer and magician, for Botello was both, some with an unconcealed awe, and others, the general among the rest, with an endeavour at looks of contempt not in good character with the interest they betrayed in all his proceedings. He raised his eyes to the beautiful luminary—enough to create by her mystic splendour the elements of superstition in the breast of a rhapsodist,—crossed himself devoutly twice or thrice, mumbled certain inexplicable words, and then said aloud, with a mournful emphasis,

"Wo to him that sits in the high place, when the moon shines from the house Allatha! But the time has not come; and I dare not speak the hour of its visitation."

"And what shall it advantage me to know my peril, if I have not such knowledge as may enable me to prevent it?" demanded Narvaez, with a frown.

"And what would it benefit thee to know the time of thy peril," said the astrologer, "when God has not given thee the power to avert it? What is written must be fulfilled; what is declared must be accomplished. Listen—the queen of night is in the eighteenth mansion; and under that influence, discord is

sown in the hearts of men, sedition comes to the earth, and conspiracy hatches under the green leaf."

The general turned quickly upon his officers, and surveyed them with an eye of suspicion. They looked blankly one upon another, until Duero, laughing in a forced and unnatural manner, cried,

"Why should we listen to this madman, if we are so affected by his ravings? Señor general, you will straightway look upon us all as traitors!"

"There have been villains about us before," muttered the general, "but I will not take the moon's word for it; and the more especially that I must receive it through this man's interpretation."

"It is the influence, too, that is good for the friendless captive," continued the magician; "and many a heart that beats under bonds to-night, will leap in freedom to-morrow."

"Every way this is bad for us," said Duero, banteringly. "I would advise your excellency to clap chains on the legs of De Leste and the scribe, who are, I think, saving the few rogues of Cortes who have craved to enter into our service, the only prisoners in our possession."

"And dost thou think this gibberish will move me to any such precaution?" cried Narvaez, with a compelled smile. "Thou canst not believe I listen to it for aught but diversion?"

"Surely not, if your excellency says so. But still may we guard the prisoners, without fear of being laughed at for our superstition,—as long as we have faith in the discretion of all present."

"Guard them thyself, if thou wilt," said the general; "I am not moved enough for such condescension.—Continue thy mummeries, Botello," he went on, "and when thou art done with the moon, of which I am heartily tired, I will look for thee to introduce me to some essence that speaks a clearer language."

"What wouldst thou have?" cried the astrologer;

"what plainer language wouldst thou have spoken? In the house Allatha is written the defection of friends, the dethronement of princes, the fall of citadels in a siege."

"Villain and caitiff! dost thou dare to insinuate that this citadel of Zempoala is in a state of siege?" cried the Biscayan, with a ferocious frown.

"I speak of the things that are to come;" said Botello. "What more than this wilt thou have?"

"It will doubtless be well," interrupted Duero, significantly, "to evacuate this city in the morning. By encamping in the fields, we can certainly avoid the danger of a besieged citadel."

"Dost thou gibe me, Don Andres?" said Narvaez, with a brow on which jealousy struggled with rage.

The secretary of Velasquez laid his hand on his heart, with a gesture of respectful deprecation.

"Ay! I see thou art stirred by these phantasms!" cried the governor, with a harsh laugh, looking from Duero to the other cavaliers. "What means this, my masters? Do ye all stare as if ye had got among you a dead Samuel, telling ye of your deaths on the morrow? Cheer up,—for, by'r lady, I intend, if this old fellow's command of the black art runs so far, to divert you with a more horrible companion. What sayest thou, Botello? It is whispered thou canst raise devils, and force them to speak to thee!"

"Ay!" said Botello, with a ghastly grin, staring the general in the face, until the latter faltered before him. "Wilt thou adventure then so far? Canst *thou*, whose eyes tremble at the gaze of a living creature, think to look upon the face of a fallen angel? Hast thou confessed to-day, and been absolved? hast thou been free, since the sun-rise, of thoughts of treachery and feelings of wrath? The pentacle and the circle, the consecrated sword and the crucifix, the sign of the cross and the muttered paternoster, will not protect the unshriven sinner from the claws of a raised *demon*."

"If thou canst raise him," said Narvaez stoutly,

"do so, and quickly. I fortify myself in the name of God and the Holy Ones, against all spirits and devils. It will be much satisfaction to my curiosity to look upon one of the accursed."

"They are about us in the air—they are at our elbows and ears," said Botello; "and it needs but a spell to be spoken to bring them before us. But woe to him that hath thought a sin to day, when the Evil One looks on him!"

"Señor Narvaez," cried Duero, with a most expressive and contagious alarm, "if it be your inclination to raise the devil, you must indulge it alone. For my part, I confess there have been, this day, certain sinful thoughts about my bosom, which have unfitted me for such an interview; and—I care not who knows it—my valour has in it so little of the fire of faith, I would sooner, at any moment, speak with ten men than one devil. God be with you, señor,—I wish you a good evening."

"Tarry, Duero; stay, cavaliers!" cried Narvaez, losing much of his own dread in the contemplation of the apprehension of others. "Why, you are such a knot of sinners as I dreamed not I had about me! Faith, I am ashamed of you, and of you in particular, Duero; for I thought thy shrewdness would have seen in this knave's attempt to frighten us from the exhibition, an excellent evidence of his inability to make it."

"I could show thee more than thou couldst see," said Botello, "and, I know, more things will come to thee than thou *shalt* see. I know, with all thy vaunting, thou wouldst perish in the gaze of an angel of hell; for thy heart would be the heart of a boy, and it flutters already, even at the thought of the spectacle.—I will show thee an essence thou mayest look upon without alarm."

"Do so," said Narvaez, sternly; "and remember, while saying what may be necessary by way of explanation, that thou speakest to the chief and governor of these lands, who will whip thy head from thy

neck, in spite of all the devils, if thou discourest not with more becoming reverence."

"My fate is written!" cried Botello, with neither indignation or alarm; and drawing calmly from his bosom an implement of his art, he advanced to the light, and displayed it freely to the cavaliers. It was, or seemed to be, an antique jewel of rock-crystal, not bigger than a pigeon's egg, set in the centre of a triangular disk of gold, on which last, were engraved many unknown characters and figures. Crossing himself twice or thrice, the enchanter swung it by a little silver chain to which it was pendent, in the full blaze of the lamp; so that either of the persons present might have handled it, had any been so disposed. But, in truth, the superstition of an age for which no marvel was too gross, no miracle too wonderful, was more or less shared by all; and they merely surveyed it at a distance with curiosity and fear.

"This," said the magician,—“a gem more precious to the wise than the adamant of the East, but in the hands of the unfaithful, more pernicious than the tooth of a viper,—is the prison-house of an essence that was once powerful among the spirits of night. The great Agrippa wedged him in this stone; and from Agrippa, when I rested at his feet in the holy city, did I receive the inestimable gift.—Kalidon-Sadabath! the night is thy season, the midnight thy time of power! The lord of men calls thee from thy prison-house, the armed man calls thee with the sword!—Lo! he wakes from his slumber, and will image out the destiny of the seeker!”

The cavaliers, starting, gazed behind them with fear, as if expecting to behold some mighty fiend rising shadowy from the floor; but no intelligence more lofty or more ignoble than themselves was visible in the sanctuary. They bent their eyes upon the crystal, and beheld, some with surprise and others with deep awe, a little drop as of some black liquid, *glittering* in the very centre of the jewel.

The haughty soldiers who would have rushed with cries of joy upon an army of infidels, shrank away with murmurs of hesitation, when Botello extended the talisman towards them. But they mistook the gesture of the magician; his arm was outstretched more to display the wonder than to part with it. He surveyed it himself a moment with much satisfaction; then turning to Narvaez, he said,

"Lay thy hand upon the cross of thy sword, say a paternoster over in thy heart, and thou shalt be protected from the mischief of this inquisition, while I tell thee what I behold in the face of Kalidon-Sadabath."

"With your favour," cried Narvaez, suddenly and boldly snatching the enchanted crystal from the hands of Botello, "I will choose rather to see his visage myself, than trust to your interpretations; and as for the protection, I can con over a paternoster while I am looking: though, why it needs to bestow so much piety upon this juggler's gewgaw, is more than I can understand."

"Say at least the prayer," cried Botello, earnestly, "for neither enchanted crystal nor consecrated gold can hold the strong spirit from the wicked and self-sufficient."

"I have much trust in the saints, and in myself," said the governor, coolly, greatly assured and inspired by the harmless appearance of the little mystery. "Nevertheless, I will follow your counsel, in the matter of the prayer,—the more readily that it will keep my mind from wandering to more important affairs; and because, in part, I am somewhat burdened with the sin of neglecting such duties, when there is more occasion for them."

He drew the lamp to him, grasped the crystal firmly in his hands, and bending over it so closely that his warm breath sullied its lustre, regarded it with a fixed attention. The cavaliers noted the proceeding with interest; they gazed now at the jewel almost concealed in his grasp, and now at the gene-

ral, as his lips muttered over the inaudible prayer.— Suddenly, and before he had half accomplished the task, they observed his brows knit, and his lip fall; his eye dilated with a stare of terror,—a deadly paleness came over his visage,—and starting up and loosing the talisman from his grasp, he exclaimed wildly,

“By heaven, there is a living creature in the stone!”

The sorcerer caught the magical implement as it fell from the hands of Narvaez; and throwing himself upon his knees, while the cavaliers looked on in mute astonishment, exclaimed:—

“Forget not the prayer! and be content to hear what is revealed by the imp of the crystal. Kalidon-Sadabath! He flingeth abroad his arms, and is in wrath and trouble!”

“It is true,” said Narvaez, looking to his officers in perturbation. “While I looked into the shining stone, the black drop increased in size, and grew into the similitude of a being, whose arms were tossed out as if in agony, while spots of fire gathered round his visage!”

“Say the prayer, if thou wilt not die miserably before the time that is otherwise ordained!” cried Bortello with a stern voice, that was remarkable enough, to be addressed by one of his station to the proud and powerful commander. “Once, twice—Ay! is there no more to be reckoned by thee, Sadabath? Once, twice—Yea, as the star sayeth, so sayest thou—Once, twice!”

“What sayest thou?” said Narvaez, ceasing the prayer he had resumed, to question the oraculous adept.

“To thy prayer! Listen, and ask not.—Ay! thou speakest in mystery! I turn thee to the north, which thou knewest not, and the south, where thou hadst thy dwelling,—to the east, which thou abhorrest, and to the west, where was thy dark chamber; to the heaven, whose light thou lovest not,—to the pit under

the earth, where thou wast a wanderer,—and to man's heart, which was pleasanter to thee than the bonds of the crystal. In the name of the Seven that are of power under the earth, and of the Seven that are mighty above, I call to thee, Kalidon-Sadabath, the bright star that is quenched! In shadows, in fire and smoke,—in thunder and with spears—with blows and with bloodshed, thou speakest, and I hear thee!"

"I hear nothing save thy accursed croaking, worse than that of the crows of Biscay," cried Narvaez, hotly. "If thy devil have no more intelligible gabble, cast him out, and call another."

"He speaks not, but by images and phantasms pictured on the crystal.—Now listen, for thy story cometh. I see a great house on fire—"

"Ay, I shall perish then in a conflagration!" said the governor, hastily. "I have ever had a horror of burning houses."

"The smoke eddies, the flame roars, and one sitteth blindfold under the eaves, with the flakes and cinders falling about him, which he sees not."

"If thou meanest, that I shall rest, in that stupid state, under such peril, thy devil Sadabath is a liar, and I defy him!"

"And he that takes thee by the hand," cried Bottello, without regarding the interruptions,—“is he thy friend?"—

"Ay, answer me that question," said the governor; "for if I am to be led out of the fire by a foeman, I will straightway forswear my friends, and give my heart to the magnanimous."

"Thou doest him obeisance!" cried the magician, with extraordinary emphasis—

"Villain!" exclaimed the general.

"Thou placest thy neck upon the earth, and he tramples it!"

"Liar and traitor!" roared the Biscayan, spurning the magician with his foot, and, in his fury, snatching up a weapon to despatch him.

"Why shouldst thou stain thy hand with the blood

of the dotard?" cried Duero, interposing for a second time between the intemperate commander and the object of his anger. "He is a madman, incapable of understanding what he says; and were he even sane, and speaking the truth, your commands to have him entertain you with his mummeries, should have ensured him against your anger."

"Very true," said Narvaez, with a scowl; "I was a fool to strike him.—Trample on my neck! Thou grizzly and cheating villain!—Go! begone!—Thy devil, though he cannot tell thee what awaits thee in the morning, may show thee what thou deservest."

"I deserved not to be spurned," said Botello tranquilly, after having gathered up his enchanted crystal, and raised himself to his feet; "and the dishonour will fall not on the side that was bruised, but on the limb that was raised against it.—Once already, to-day, have I cursed the man that struck me in my captivity; and he lies a corse on his couch."

"It is true," said a young cavalier, shuddering. "I inquired after Caboban, when I came from the prison with Botello—he was dead!"

"I will curse no more to-day," said the magician, sorrowfully; "for it is a sin upon the soul to kill with maledictions; and, moreover, thou, that hast done me this wrong, wilt suffer enough, without a new retribution!"

The general waved his hand angrily and impatiently, and Botello was led away, followed by most of the cavaliers.

CHAPTER XII.

WHEN Don Amador found himself alone in the prison with Fabueno, with no other prospect before him than that of remaining therein till it might please *the stars* to throw open the doors, the rage that was

too philosophic to quarrel with stone walls, gradually subsided into a tranquil indignation. Nay, so much command of himself did he regain, that hearing his companion bewailing his fate in a manner somewhat immoderate, as if regarding his incarceration as the prelude to a more dismal destiny, he opened his lips to give him comfort.

"I must counsel thee, friend Lorenzo," he said, "to give over this vain and very boyish lamentation, as being entirely unworthy the spirit I beheld thee display in presence of that Biscayan boar. The insult and shame of our present imprisonment are what thou dost not share; and therefore thou shouldst not be grieved on that account. And, doubtless, as thou wert arrested less because thou wert in fault, than because this foolish governor was in a passion, he will liberate thee, when he cools in the morning."

"I have no such hope," said Fabueno, piteously. "Don Panfilo is a most bitter and unforgiving man, sudden in his wrath, inexorable in his vengeance; and he has already indulged his fury at the expense of men so much more elevated and powerful than myself, that I am in great fear he will give me to some heavy punishment, for daring to oppose his humours."

"Know, Lorenzo," said the novice, "that, in that opposition, thou didst show thyself possessed of a spirit which has won my respect; and unless thou dost already repent thy boldness, I will confess I am very grateful to thee, that thou didst grasp thy sword in my cause. For which reason, when we are again free, I will beseech the admiral to grant thee thy wish, and immediately receive thee into my service, as a pupil in war."

"And how is your worship to be freed?" said Lorenzo, disconsolately. "Sure am I, Don Panfilo will no more regard your worship's honour and dignity than he did the privileges of the licentiate Vasques de Ayllon, the agent of the holy monks of San Gerónimo, and, what is more, an *oidor* of the king himself; whom, notwithstanding all these titles, he im-

prisoned and banished, for thwarting him in a small matter."

"I have, in my own present situation, a sufficient and never-to-be-forgotten proof of his violence and injustice," said Amador. "Nevertheless, I entertain hopes of being soon at freedom; for if some lucky opportunity do not enable me myself to break my bonds, I am assured, the news of this most causeless and tyrannical outrage will, in some way, be carried to the ears of my kinsman, the knight Calavar; after which, I shall be very confident of liberation, and, after liberation, as I may add, of satisfaction on the body of my wronger. But, before we give ourselves up to despondence, let us see in what manner we may be able to help ourselves. We should at least look a little to the various entrances that seem to lead into this dungeon."

The apartment was spacious, but low; a narrow casement opened on one side, at the distance of six feet from the floor, and admitted the moonbeams, by which the captives were enabled to conduct their examination. The door, through which they had entered, was strongly barricaded on the outside. A passage leading to the interior, was similarly secured, and equally impassable. The neophyte, with a sigh, turned to the casement. A thick grating defended it, and shut out all hopes of escape.

"We can do nothing, unless assisted from without," said Amador.—"I would to heaven, I had kept my knaves at my side! With such a wary servant as Baltasar at my back, and so faithful a desperado as Lazaro at my side, I should have made another sort of departure from that abhorred tower. The varlets are perhaps sleeping in security, without a thought of their master. Nay, by my faith, it is not probable they should give themselves to rest, without being made acquainted with my instructions for the night. Perhaps they may be lurking in the neighbourhood, ready to hear my call, and to obey it! At all events, señor secretary, I would thou couldst

mount to those iron stanchions, and take note of what is passing on the outside."

"*Iron!*" cried the secretary quickly: "by San Iago of Compostella! a thought strikes me. I know well, señor, that in these lands, iron has almost the value of gold, and is too scarce to be wasted on the defences of a temporary dungeon, where it might be stolen too, at the first opportunity, by the Indians."

"Dost thou mean to say, that these bars are of wood?" demanded Amador.

"Indeed, I think so, señor; and if I had but a knife or dagger, and the means of climbing into the window, I would warrant to be at liberty before morning."

"Here is a poniard, of which the villains forgot to divest me," said Amador. "Strike it against the stanchions:—if they be of wood, we have much hope of freeing ourselves."

The secretary did as he was directed. He raised himself a-tiptoe, and the sharp weapon buried itself in the flimsy barrier.

"If I had but something to stand on," he cried eagerly, "how soon might we not be free!"

"There is neither stool nor chair in this vile den," said Don Amador; "but I will not shame to give thee the support of my shoulder, and the more readily, that I think thy slight frame would be incapable of supporting my own greater weight.—Pause not," he continued, observing that Fabueno hesitated: "If thy foot be near my neck, I shall know it is not the foot of an enemy.—I will kneel to take thee on my back, as the Saracen camel does to his master.—Stretch thyself to thy full height, so as to cut through the tops of the bars; after which, without further carving, thou canst easily wrench them from their places."

Fabueno submitted to the will of the novice, and Amador rising without much effort under his weight, he was soon in a position to operate to advantage.

"Why dost thou falter?" demanded the novice, as

Lorenzo, after making one or two gashes in the wood, suddenly ceased his labour.

"Señor," replied the secretary, in a low voice, "there is a guard at a little distance, sitting under the shadow of the pyramid. A cavalier stands in advance, watching—It is the captain Salvatierra!"

"May heaven strike me with pains and death," cried Amador, with an abrupt ardour, that nearly tumbled the secretary from his station, "if I do not covet the blood of that false and cowardly traitor! who, after hiding his wrath under the cloak of magnanimity and religion, was the first to seize upon me, and that from behind!"

"What is to be done, señor?" demanded Fabueno, in a whisper. "He will discover me; and even if I can remove the grating, there will be no possibility to descend without observation."

"Cut through the wood as silently as thou canst," said Amador; "and then, when the window is open, I will myself spring to the earth, and so occupy the dastard's notice, that thou shalt escape without peril. Cut on, and fear not."

The secretary obeyed, but had not yet divided a single stake, when suddenly a noise was heard as of the clattering of armour, as well as the voice of Salvatierra exclaiming furiously,

"To your bows, ye vagabonds! Quick and hotly! Drive your shafts through and through! Shoot!"—

"Descend!" said Amador.

But before the secretary could follow his counsel, there came four cross-bow shafts rattling violently into the window; and Fabueno, with a loud cry, sprang, or rather fell, to the floor.

"Have the knaves struck thee?" demanded Amador, as he raised the groaning youth in his arms.

"Ay, señor!" replied the youth, faintly, "I shall never see the golden kings of Mexico!"

"Be of better heart," said Amador, leading him to where the moonlight shone brightest on the floor.

"Art thou struck in the body?—If thou diest, be certain I will revenge thee.—Where art thou hurt?"

"I know not," replied Lorenzo, piteously; "but I know I shall die.—O heaven! this is a pang more bitter than death!—Must I die?"

"Be comforted," said the novice, cheeringly; "the arrow has only pierced thy arm! I will snap it asunder, and withdraw it. Fear not: there is no peril in such hurt; and I will bear witness thou hast won it most honourably."

"Will I not die then?" cried Fabueno, with joy. "Pho! it was the first time I was ever hurt, and I judged of the wound only by the agony. Pho, indeed! 'tis but a scratch!"

"Thou bearest it valiantly," said Amador, binding his scarf round the wound; "and I have no doubt thou wilt make a worthy soldier.—But what is now to be done? If thou thinkest thou hast strength to support me for a minute or two, I will clamber to the window myself, and remove the bars, without fear the arrows of these varlets can do me much harm through my armour."

"They are not above three-score yards distant," said Fabueno, "and, señor, I feel a little faint. I know not, moreover, how I could escape, even if your honour should be so lucky as to reach the ground."—

"I should not have forsaken thee, Lorenzo," said the cavalier, giving over, with a sigh, all hope of escape. "There is nothing more to be done.—The foul fiend seize the knave that struck thee, and the dastard that commanded the shot! I would to heaven I had beaten him soundly.—How feeblest thou now? If thou canst sleep, it will be well."

"I have no more pain," said the secretary, "but feel a sort of exhaustion, which will doubtless be relieved by rest."

"Sleep then," said Amador, "and have a care that thy wounded member be not oppressed by the weight of thy body. I will myself presently follow

thy example. If aught should occur to disturb thee, even though it should be but the pain of thy hurt, scruple not to arouse me.”—

The neophyte watched till persuaded the secretary was asleep; then devoutly repeating a prayer, he stretched himself on his hard mat with as much tranquillity as if reposing on a goodly bed in his own mountain-castle, and was soon lost to his troubles.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE cavalier was roused from his slumbers by a cause at first incomprehensible. The moonlight had vanished from the prison, and deep obscurity had succeeded; but in the little light remaining, he saw, as he started up, the figures of several men, one of whom had been tugging at his shoulder, and now whispered to him, as he instinctively grasped at his dagger,

“Peace, cavalier! I am a friend, and I give you liberty.”

“I will thank thee for the gift, when I am sure I enjoy it,” said the neophyte, already on his feet; “I remember thy voice—thou art one of the followers of the knave Narvaez?”

“I am one who laments, without extenuating, the folly of the general,” said the voice of Duero. “But tarry not to question. Hasten,—thy horse is ready.”

“Where is the youth Fabueno? It is not in my power to desert the secretary.”

“Here, señor!” whispered Lorenzo. “I am ready.”

“Ah, friend Fabueno! I am glad to hear thee speak so cheerily;—it assures me thy wound does not afflict thee.—And my varlets, señor?”

“They wait for thee, Don Amador. Delay not: the door is open. The magician will guide thee to *thy kinsman*.—Commend me to Cortes; and if thou

art at any time found fighting on the pyramid of Zempoala, remember that Duero is not thine enemy."

"By heaven, I should think I dream!" said Amador. "Stay, señor! I would thank thee for thy honourable and most noble benevolence; and, in addition, would tax thy charity in favour of a certain Moor——"

"*Tetragrammaton!* thou pratest as if thou wert among thy friends in Christendom! and of infidels too, as if there were no Christians to be thought of!" said a voice, in which Amador instantly recognised the tones of the enchanter. "I said, the captive should be freed; but never a jot that he should not be reduced to bonds again by his own folly!—Be silent, and follow me."

The neophyte had collected his scattered senses, and instantly assuming the prudence, which, he now understood, was necessary to his safety, he issued from the prison. The moon was sinking behind the vast and majestic peaks of the interior. A deep shadow lay over the great square, on one side of which stood the dungeon; and only on the top of the principal tower trembled a lingering ray. A silence still deeper than the darkness, invested the Indian city; and Amador could distinctly hear the foot-fall of a sentinel as he strode to and fro over the terrace of the pyramid. He looked to that quarter, whence, as he judged, had come the shafts which had so nearly robbed him of his fellow-prisoner. The crossbowmen slept on their post, in the mild and quiet air, at the base of the temple.

"Give me thy hand, Fabueno," said Amador, drawing his poniard again from the sheath. "I will shield thee from the dogs this time. And now that I snuff the breath of freedom! I think it will need a craftier knave's trick than that of Salvatierra, to deprive me of it a second time."

Following the magician, as he stole cautiously along, the brothers in misfortune crept on with a stealthy pace, under the shadows of buildings and

trees ; till, exchanging the more exposed openness of the square for the safer gloom of a street, they advanced with greater assurance and rapidity. The stone dwellings of the Tlatoani gave place to the earthen and wicker cabins of the suburbs.—The gray glimpses of morning had not yet visited the east, when they reached the extreme edge of the town, and betook themselves to the covert of a clump of trees, under which, in the figures that were there visible, Don Amador recognised with joy his war-horse and his followers.

“Rejoice in silence,” said Botello, interrupting his raptures ; “for there is an ear at no great distance very ready to hear thee. Mount and be ready.—Señor secretary, thy sorrel is tied to the mimosa.—You can look to your equipments a little, while I see if heaven will not confirm the fate of visions ; for I dreamed I should ride back to Cortes on a good roan charger to-day.”

The magician disappeared, and Amador, scarcely suppressing his ardour, when he found that not only his attendants and horses, but even the well-fleshed sword wrested from him in the evening, was in readiness to be restored to him, grasped it with exultation, and sprang into the saddle. Then passing towards Fabueno, and finding that his arm caused him much pain in the act of mounting, he assisted him to ascend with his own hand ; a condescension that went to the heart of the secretary. From Fabueno also he learned, in a few words, somewhat of the secret of their liberation. Less than an hour after Amador had fallen asleep, and while Lorenzo was still kept awake by the pain of his wound, the door of the prison was opened, and Botello thrust in ; who comforted the secretary with a mystic, but still an unequivocal assurance of freedom before sunrise ; and commanded him not to wake the novice, but to follow his example—he would need invigoration from slumber to support the toils of the coming day. What *previous understanding* might have existed between

the enchanter and the señor Duero, he knew not; but, certain he was, Botello had predicted a speedy deliverance for all; and all were now delivered.

"I have often considered," said the novice, thoughtfully, "that the existence of magical powers, either for the purposes of prediction or enchantment, was incompatible with the known goodness and wisdom of God; for surely if the power to foresee would have added any thing to the happiness of man, God would not have denied it to men generally. And as for the powers of enchantment, as they can only be used for good or bad purposes, it seems to me that to employ them for the first, would be to accuse the Divinity of an insufficient benevolence; while to exercise them for the last, would imply a supposition that heaven had not all men equally under its protection. This, therefore, is my opinion; though I must confess that, sometimes, when governed more by passion or imagination than by reason, I have had my misgivings on the subject. Nevertheless, good Fabueno, in this particular case of Botello, I must advise thee not too much to abuse thy credulity; for, I think, all circumstances go to show, he grounded his prophecy of our deliverance more on a knowledge of the resolutions of the good señor Duero than on the revelations of stars or spirits. Yet must I confess," continued Amador, "that this very goodness of Duero, implying, as it truly does, a state of opposition and rebellion to the will of the uncivil Narvaez, his general, is so very miraculous, as almost itself to look like magic."

Before the secretary could reply, the sound of hoofs was heard approaching; and Botello, as they discovered by his voice, rode up to the trees.

"The dream was true, the imp that speaks to slumber was not a liar!" he cried, exultingly. "We leave the jailor afoot; and Kalidon-Sadabath shall swing on a galloping horse. God is over all, by night and by day, afoot and on horse, in battle and in flight, Amen!—Now ride, and Santiago for Spain!"—He

shouted this sudden cry with a voice that amazed Amador, after his often-repeated injunctions for silence,—“Santiago for Spain! San Pedro for the Invaders! and San Pablo for flying prisoners! Whip and spur, guide and cheer! and rocks and thorns spread over the path of pursuers!”

As Don Amador anticipated, the shout of the lunatic, for such he began to esteem Botello, was carried even to the head-quarters of the Biscayan. An arquebuse was discharged from the pyramid, and, as the fugitives began their flight, the flourish of a trumpet in one quarter of the town, and the roll of a drum in another, convinced them that the alarm had been given, and was spreading from post to post in a manner that might prove exceedingly inconvenient. The cavalier pressed to the side of Botello,—an achievement of some little difficulty, for he perceived his guide was well mounted.

“Señor Magico,” he cried, as he galloped in company with him, “dost thou know thou couldst not have fallen upon a better plan to oppose our flight, and perhaps reduce us again to bonds, than by the indulgence of this same untimely and obstreperous shouting?”

“Trust in God, and fear not,” replied the magician. “This day shalt thou look upon the face of Cortes; and though the enemy follow us, yet shall his pursuit be vain and unlucky.”

“I will allow that such may be the termination,” said Amador; “yet, notwithstanding, can I perceive no advantage in being pursued; but much that is to be deprecated, inasmuch as we shall exhaust that strength of our horses in our hurry, which might have been reserved for a more honourable contingency.”

“Your valour will by-and-by perceive there is more wisdom than looks to the moment,” said Botello, coolly, without slacking his pace: “and, *provided* you can keep your followers from swerving *from the path*, and that inexperienced youth from

falling out of his saddle, I will, with my head, answer for your safety."

Amador dropped behind a little: Lazaro and Baltasar required no instructions to keep them in the neighbourhood of their master; and the secretary, though complaining that he rode in pain, professed himself able to keep up with the party. From his henchmen, as he rode, Don Amador obtained but little to unravel the mystery of his escape. The two attendants had been quartered alone in a deserted building, in the garden of which they were instructed to provide for their steeds. They had been roused by a cavalier, who commanded them to follow him to their master, in token of whose authority he showed them the well-known blade of the novice. He had conducted them to the grove, and left them, with charges to remain, as they had done, in tranquillity, until the appearance of Don Amador.

At the dawn of day, the neophyte became convinced he had ridden more than the distance which, he supposed, separated the camps of the rival generals; and wondering at the absence of all signs of life in the forest through which he was passing, he again betook himself to Botello.

The magician had halted on the brow of an eminence, where, though the dense wood, as well as the obscurity of the hour, greatly contracted the sphere of vision, he looked back as if striving to detect the figures of pursuers among the thick shadows. The shouts of men were heard far behind; but this circumstance, instead of filling the mind of Botello with alarm, gave, on the contrary, to his countenance an expression of great satisfaction.

"We are pursued, enchanter; and yet, I perceive neither tent nor outpost of thy friends, to give us refuge from our enemies," said Don Amador.

"Let them come," cried Botello, tranquilly: "It is worse for the stag, when the pack is scattered; but better for the kite, when the pheasants have broke the covey."

"There may be much wisdom in thy tropes, as well as in thine actions," said the novice; "yet am I slow to discover it in either. Whether we are to be considered the stag or the hounds, the hawk or the pheasants, entirely passes my comprehension; but sure am I that, in either case, our safety may be considered quite as metaphorical as thy speech. I understood from thee, last night, and I remember it very well, because it was that communication which exasperated me into a quarrel with the governor,—that the river whereon Cortes was encamped, was but a league from Zempoala; yet am I persuaded we have galloped twice that distance."

"He travels no straight road who creeps through the country of a foeman," said Botello, resuming his journey, though at a more moderate gait than before; "and Don Amador should be content, if he can avoid the many scouts and vedettes that infest the path, by riding thrice the two leagues he has compassed already."

"Fogoso is strong, and, it seems to me, his spirit revives at every new step he takes through these fresh forests," said the cavalier; "yet even for his sake, were there no other reason, would I be fain to pick the shortest road that leads to the camp of Cortes. I am greatly concerned about my young friend, the secretary, who, as thou hast doubtless learned, was last night shot through the arm with an arrow, by those knaves who kept watch at the window of the prison; and therefore, for his sake, am I desirous to find a resting place as soon as possible. If I should give thee my counsel, (a thing I am loath to do, as thou seemest experienced in all the intricacies of this woody wilderness, in which I am a stranger,) it would be, to forsake all these crooked and endless by-ways without delay, and strike upon the shortest path, without consideration of any small party of scouts we might meet. For, even excluding the wounded *Fabuëno*, we are here together four strong men, armed, and well mounted, who, fighting our way to freedom,

would doubtless be an over-match for twice the number of enemies."

"The youth must learn the science of a soldier," said Botello, "and suffering is the first letter of its alphabet. Happy will he be if, in the life he covets, he encounter no more agony than he shall endure to-day. When we have time to rest, I will anoint his arm with a salve more powerful than the unguents of a physician.—What I do, señor, and whither I guide, are best; as you will acknowledge, when the journey is over. Why should your honour desire to exchange blows with poor scouts? I shall win better thanks of the knight Calavar, when I conduct you to him unharmed.—Faster, señor—the pursuers are gaining on us."

The neophyte gave the rein to Fogoso, and greatly inflamed by the mention of his kinsman's name, rode by the side of Botello, to demand of him such intelligence of the knight as it might be in his power to impart. Little more, however, had the astrologer to communicate than Amador had already acquired. The knight Calavar was in the camp of Cortes, among the most honoured of his followers, if such he could be called, who divided the perils, without claiming to share the profits of the campaign, and fought less when he was commanded or entreated than when moved by his own wayward impulses. That he was in good bodily health, was also another point on which Botello was able to satisfy curiosity; and as he made no mention of another subject, on which Don Amador scrupled to speak, he was glad to believe the distractions of the new world had given some relief to the mental maladies of his kinsman.

A very little circumstance served, however, almost at the same moment to reveal one of his own infirmities. As the morning dawned, and objects were seen more distinctly, he began to bend an eye of observation on the horse which Botello rode,—a spirited beast, as he had already determined, by many evidences of fleetness and mettle. When he came to regard it

more closely, he perceived, by signs not to be mistaken, that it was no other than the animal which had, the day before, caracoled under the weight of Salvatierra. Botello grinned, when an exclamation made him acquainted with the thoughts of the cavalier. To the demand where and how he had obtained possession of the charger, the answer was brief and significant. The captain Salvatierra, like many other officers of Narvaez, preferred rather to waste the moonlight nights with the olive-cheeked Dalilahs of the suburbs, than with enemies and prisoners, even though they might be men of such merit and distinction as Don Amador. This was a peculiarity with which (he did not say whether by the instrumentality of his art, or the intervention of human agents,) Botello had contrived to become acquainted; and being also apprised of Salvatierra's favourite retreat, which was at no great distance from the grove wherein Don Amador had found his followers, he did not hesitate to deprive him of so superfluous an appendage as his charger.

"By St. John!" cried the neophyte, in a heat, "I would have bestowed upon thee more cruzadoes than thou canst gain by a month's exercise of thine art, hadst thou but made me acquainted with his hiding-place. I now know, the man who could strike a boy, and attack one he hated from behind, is a most execrable caitiff, more worthy of misprision than revenge; but despite all this, I should have begun this day's labours with more tranquillity and self-approval, had I but enjoyed two moments of conference with him previously."

"Your worship may have a day for acquitting scores with him more conveniently than you could have done this morning," said Botello.

"Hark'ee, Botello," cried Amador, eagerly—"It is thy absolute opinion we are at this moment pursued,—is it not?"

"I do not doubt it—I hear shouts behind, ever and anon."

"I will tell thee what I will do," continued the neophyte: "I will tarry here with Lazaro and Baltasar: thou, if thou thinkest fit, canst advance with the secretary—I should be loath to bring him into combat before his wound is healed, and before Lazaro has given him some instructions in the management of his arms."——

"All this thou wilt do then," said Botello, interrupting him, "on the presumption that Salvatierra is among the pursuers? Your worship may satisfy yourself, the vigilant cavalier is, at this moment, either abiding the reproof of Narvaez for his negligence, or biting his thumbs with disgust, as, among mounted captains, he walks through the streets of Zempoala. Horses are not in this land so plentiful as rabbits; and I thank the blessed influences, which have given to me so good a friend this day," he went on, patting the neck of the steed,—“so very good, that, until there comes a new fleet from Cuba, the captain Salvatierra will be scarce able to follow after his charger. This may satisfy your honour on one point. As to another, I beg to assure you, Don Amador, that I am no lying juggler, selling my revelations for money. I tell what is told me, when I am moved by the spirit that is given to dwell within me; and neither real of silver nor doubloon of gold can otherwise buy me to open my lips!"

CHAPTER XIV.

To the surprise, and much also to the dissatisfaction, of Don Amador, the noon-day sun still found him struggling, with his companions, among the rocks and forests. It seemed to him, from a review of his journey, that he had been doubling and turning, for the whole morning, like a boy at blindman's-buff, within a circle of a few leagues; and though he

could not, upon the closest inspection, detect a single tree or brook which he remembered to have passed before, he shrewdly suspected it was Botello's intention to make him well acquainted with the forest, before dismissing him from its depths. It was however vain to wonder, and equally fruitless to complain. For the whole morning, at different intervals, he was assured, sometimes from hearing their shouts in the thicket, sometimes from beholding them from a hill-top crossing an opposing eminence, that his pursuers were close at his heels: of which fact, and the necessity it presented to move with becoming caution, the enchanter took advantage in the construction of his answers to every remonstrance. At length, perhaps two hours after noon, the travellers approached a hill, whence, as Botello assured them, they might look down upon the River of Canoes. This was the more agreeable intelligence, since the day was intolerably hot, and they almost longed for the bursting of a tempest which had been brooding in the welkin for the last half hour, the drenching of which, as they thought, would be far more sufferable than the combustion of sunshine. They reached the hill, and from its bushy and stony side, looked down upon the valley, where the river, or, more properly speaking, the rivulet, went foaming and fretting over its rugged channel. On the hither side of the stream, the vale was bare and sandy, and on the other, though doubtless partaking of the same character, the trees which bordered upon the water, making divers agreeable groves, entirely shut out the view, so that Don Amador saw not, as he had fondly anticipated, the encampment of the invader of Mexico, and the resting-place of his kinsman. But if he beheld not what he so much desired to see, he surveyed another spectacle, which caused him no little wonder. At a short distance, and almost at the bottom of the hill, he was struck with the unexpected apparition of the army of Narváez, drawn out in order of battle, as if awaiting the approach of a foe, and commanding the pas-

sage of the river. He rubbed his eyes with astonishment; but there was no delusion in the view.

"Señor," said Botello, in a low voice, as if reading his thoughts, "you marvel to see this army, which we left sleeping at the temple, arrived at the river before us; but you forget Zempoala lies only a league from the river."

"Let us descend, and cross to the other side," said Amador, impatiently. "I see the very spot where sits the knave Narvaez on his horse; and if the valiant Cortes have it in intention, as I do not doubt, to give him battle, I should sharply regret to watch the conflict from this hill-side."

"I told Narvaez, himself," said the magician, with a sort of triumph, "he should not join battle with Cortes to-day; and he shall not!—When the time comes, Don Amador may join in the combat, if he will.—Be content, señor: we cannot stir from this hill without being observed, and captured or slain. The thunder roars, the bolt glitters in the heaven; the storm that levels the tall ceibas, will open us a path presently, even through that angry army."

Almost while Botello spoke, and before the cavalier could add words to the disinclination with which he regarded so untimely a delay, there burst such a thunderbolt over his head, as made Fogoso, in common with every other horse in the party, cower to the earth, as if stricken by its violence. This was immediately followed by a succession of separate explosions and of multisonous volleys, less resembling the furious roar of the ordnance of a great army than of the artillery of volcanoes; and it became immediately necessary for each man to dismount, and allay, as he could, the frantic terrors of his charger. In the midst of this sublime prelude, the rushing of a mighty wind was added to the orchestre of the elements; and, in an instant, the face of day, the black vapours above and the varied valley below, were hidden in a cloud of dust, sand, and leaves, stripped in a moment from the plains and the forest;

and in an instant also, the army of Narvaez was snatched from the eyes of the cavalier. Presently, also, came another sound, heard even above the peal of the thunder and the rush of the wind; the roar of a great rain, booming along like a moving cataract, was mingled with the harsh music of nature; and Don Amador looked anxiously round for some place of shelter. Happily, though no cavern welcomed them into its gloomy security, there was a spot hard by, where certain tall and massive rocks lay so jammed and wedged together, as to present most of the characteristics of a chamber, except that there was wanting the fourth side, as well as the roof, unless indeed the outstretched branches of the great trees that grew among these fragments, might have been considered a suitable canopy. A spring bubbled up from among these mossy ruins, giving nourishment to a thick growth of brambles and weeds, which added their own tangled covert to the stouter shelter of the rocks and trunks. Into this nook the party, guided by Botello, to whom it seemed not unfamiliar, penetrated forthwith; and here they found themselves, in a great measure, sheltered from the rain. Here also, taking advantage of a period of inactivity, and at the instigation of Don Amador, who perceived with solicitude the visage of the secretary covered not only with languor, but flushed with fatigue and fever, the enchanter set about relieving the distresses of the youth. He removed the bandage and garment, examined the wound, bathed the inflamed member in the cool waters of the fountain; and having thus commenced proceedings with so reasonable a preliminary, he drew a little silver vessel from his wallet, containing the unguent 'blessed,' as he had before said, 'of the fat of a pagan's heart,' and which, as may be repeated to those who might doubt the efficacy of so remarkable a compound, was not only much used, but highly commended by the Christian soldiers of that day in America. The magician commanded Fabueno to repeat

a pater-noster as slowly and devoutly as possible, (for none of Botello's conjurations were conducted without the appearance of deep devotion;) and mumbling himself another, or perhaps repeating some superstitious invocation, he applied the ointment, previously spread over green leaves, to the wound; and when it was again bound up, the secretary declared its anguish was much mitigated, as well as his whole body greatly refreshed.

Don Amador regarded the youth for a moment with much grave kindness; and then said,—

"I owe this man so much gratitude for the good he seems to have, and doubtless has, done thee, whom I now, Fabueno,—at least until I can receive instructions from my kinsman, the admiral,—must esteem as being my ward and follower, that I am unwilling to offend him by seeming to throw any discredit on his remedy. Nevertheless I am not less bound to instruct thee with counsel, than to repay him with thanks; for which reason I must charge thee to remember, that, when any miracle of a very unusual or unnecessary character is wrought upon thyself, much more of it may possibly be the product of thine own imagination, than of that agent which seems to thee to be the only cause."

("Faith will work miracles, but fancy will not!")
said Botello, gravely.

"If I were a better philosopher, good Botello," said Don Amador, "I would attempt to show thee how that which thou callest faith, is, in such a case as this, nothing but imagination in very fervent action, differing as much from that calm assurance which constitutes true faith, as doth a potter's pitcher gilded to resemble true gold, from a golden pitcher; which difference, in the latter case, may be instantly detected, by ringing them. And here I may tell thee, Botello, by way of continuing the figure, that, as the earthen vessel will really tinkle more pleasantly than the vessel of gold, so also will the excited imagination give forth a sound so much more captivating

than the tranquil utterance of belief, that, in attempting to distinguish between them, men are often seduced into error. Nevertheless, I will not quarrel with thee on this subject, for I perceive thou art religious; and what thy religion does not blame in thee, I have no right to censure."

This was a degree of liberality doubtless produced rather by the amiable feeling of gratitude than any natural tolerance of disposition or education; for the neophyte was in all respects a representative of the nobler spirits of his age, in whom the good qualities inherited from nature were dashed, and sometimes marred, by the tenets of a bad philosophy.

CHAPTER XV.

THIS discourse of the novice, together with the magical unction of the wound, occupied so much time, that when it was finished, the storm had in a great measure passed away; and Botello, either feeling his inability to reply to it with an allegory of equal beauty, or despairing to overcome the scepticism of the cavalier, instead of answering, rose from his seat, and led the way to the post on the hill-side, which they had lately deserted.

Drops of rain still occasionally fell from the heavens, or were whirled by the passing gusts from the boughs; the clouds still careered menacingly in the atmosphere; and though the sunbeams ever and anon burst through their rent sides, and glimmered with splendour on the shivered tops and lacerated roots of many a fallen tree, it was still doubtful at what moment the capricious elements might resume their conflict. The river, that was before a brook, now rolled along a turbid torrent, and seemed, every moment, to augment in volume and fury, as its short-lived tributaries poured down their foaming treasures from the hills.—

"The boy to his bed, and the fool to his fire-side!" cried the enchanter, with a sudden exultation, as, pointing down the hill, he disclosed to the cavalier the valley deprived of its late visitors. The armed men of Cadmus had not risen from the soil with a more magical celerity than had the soldiers of Narvaez vanished: the valley was silent and solitary. "I said the tempest should open for us a path!" continued Botello; "and lo! the spirit which was given to me does not lie!"

"I must confess," quoth Don Amador, with surprise, "you have in this instance, as in several others, verified your prediction. What juggler's trick is this? Where is the hound Narvaez?"

"Galloping back to Zempoala, to amuse himself with the dancers on the pyramid," said Botello, with a grin of saturnine delight. "He came out against Cortes, and his heart failed him in the tempest: he loves better, and so do his people, the comfort of the temple, than the strife of these tropical elements. Wo be to him who would contend with a strong man, when he hides his head from the shower! He shall vapour in the morning, but tremble when the enemy comes to him in dreams!"

"And I am to understand, then," said Amador, with a voice of high scorn and displeasure, "that these effeminate hinds, after drawing out their forces in the face of an enemy, have taken to their heels, like village girls in a summer festival, at the dashing of rain?"

"It is even so," said Botello: "they are now hiding themselves in their quarters; while those veterans who awaited them beyond the river, stand yet to their arms, and blush even to look for the shelter of a tree."

"Let us descend, then," said the cavalier, "and join them without delay; for I believe those men of Cortes are true soldiers, and I long to make their acquaintance."

"It is needful we do so, and that quickly," said the

astrologer; "for this river, though by midnight it shall again be shrunk to a fairy brook, will, in an hour, be impassable."

It required not many moments to convey the party to the banks of the stream; but when they had reached it, it was apparent, it could not be forded without peril. Its channel was wild and rocky; fallen and shivered trees fringed its borders with a bristling net-work, over and among which the current raved with a noisy turbulence. The cavalier regarded it with solicitude; but perceiving that the magician was urging his horse into it without hesitation, he prepared forthwith to follow his example. He saw, however, that the secretary faltered; and feeling as much pity for his inexperience, as commiseration for the helplessness to which, as he supposed, the arrow-hurt had reduced him, he rode up to him with words of comfort and encouragement.

"Thou perceivest," he said, "that Botello goes into the water without fear. Thou shalt pass, Lorenzo, without danger; for besides placing Lazaro on one side of thee, I will myself take station on the other. If thou shouldst, by any mischance, find thyself out of depth, all that thou canst do, will be to trust the matter to thy horse, who is doubtless too sagacious to thrust himself into any superfluous jeopardy. Be of good heart: this is a small matter: thou wilt one day, perhaps, if thou continuest to desire the life and fame of a soldier, have to pass a more raging torrent than this, and that, too, in the teeth of an enemy."

The secretary blushed at his fears, and willing to retrieve his character, dashed into the flood with an alacrity that carried him beyond his patron. For a moment he advanced steadily and securely, at the heels of Botello; but becoming alarmed at the sight of a tree surging down towards him, he veered a little from the direction, and instantly found his horse swimming under him. Before Lazaro or the cavalier could approach to his aid, his discomposure got so much the better of his discretion, that he began to

jerk and pull at the reins in such a manner as to infuse some of his own disorder into the steed. Don Amador beheld the sorrel nag not only plunging and rearing in the water, but turning his head down the stream, and swimming with the current.

"Give thy horse the reins, and perplex him not, Lorenzo!" he cried, urging the dauntless Fogoso to his rescue; "jerk not, pull not, or thou wilt be in great danger."

But before the secretary could obey the voice of Don Amador, and before the latter could reach him, the hand of Lazaro had grasped the bridle, and turned the animal's head to the bank.

"Suppose thou wert in the midst of a company of fighting spearmen, instead of this spluttering gutter," said the man-at-arms, in his ear, "wouldst thou distract thy beast in this school-boy fashion?"

The contemptuous composure of the soldier did more to restore the spirits of Fabueno, than the counsels of the cavalier; and yielding up the guidance of himself as well as his animal, to Lazaro, he was soon out of danger.

In the meanwhile, Don Amador, in his hurry to give the secretary relief, had taken so little note of his own situation, that when he beheld his ward in safety, he discovered that he was himself even more disagreeably situated. A few yards below him was a cluster of rocks, against which, as he discerned at a glance, it would be fatal to be dashed, but which he saw not how he could avoid, inasmuch as the bank above them was so palisaded by the sharp and jutting boughs of a prostrate tree, that it seemed impossible he could effect a landing there. While balancing in doubt, at a time when doubt, as he well knew, was jeopardy, he heard a voice suddenly crying to him from the bank,

"What ho, señor! holla! 'Ware the rocks, and spur on: your hope is in the tree-top."

While Don Amador instinctively obeyed this command, and urged his steed full towards the threaten-

ing branches, he raised his head, and perceived a cavalier on a dun horse riding into the water, above the rocks hard by the tree, as if to convince him of the practicability of the passage, and the shallowness of the water. This unknown auxiliary stretched forth his hand, and doing to Amador the service rendered by Lazaro to the secretary, the neophyte instantly found himself in safety, and ascending the bank of the river. Not till his charge was on dry land, did the stranger relax his hand; and then perhaps the sooner, that Don Amador seized it with a most cordial gripe, and while he held it, said, fervently,—

“I swear to thee, cavalier! I believe thou hast saved me from a great danger, if thou hast not absolutely preserved my life: for which good deed, besides giving thee my most unfeigned present thanks, I avow myself, till the day of my death, enslaved under the necessity to requite thee with any honourable risk thou canst hereafter impose.”

While Don Amador spoke, he perused the countenance and surveyed the figure of his deliverer. He was a man in the prime and midway of life, tall and long-limbed, but with a breadth of shoulders and development of muscle that proved him, as did the grasp with which he assisted the war-horse from the flood, to possess great bodily strength. His face was handsome and manly, though with rather delicate features; and a very lofty and capacious forehead shone among thin black locks, and under a velvet cap worn in a negligent manner, with a medal of a saint dragging loosely from it. His beard was black and thin, like his hair, and Amador plainly perceived through it the sear of a sword-cut between the chin and mouth. His garments were of a fine and dark cloth, without much ornament; but his *fanfarrona*, as it was called in the language of the cavaliers, was a gold chain of at least thrice the weight and bigness of the neophyte's, linked round his neck, and supporting a pendant of Christ and the Virgin; and in addi-

tion, Don Amador saw on a finger of the hand he grasped, a diamond ring of goodly size and lustre. Such was the valiant gentleman, who won the friendship of the neophyte not less by his ready good will than by his excellent appearance; although this last qualification was perhaps not displayed to advantage, inasmuch as his whole attire and equipments, as well as the skin and armour of his horse, were dripping with wet, as if both had been lately plunged into the river or exposed to all the rigour of the storm. He replied to Don Amador's courtesies with a frank and open countenance, and a laugh of good humour, as if entirely unconscious of any discomfort from his reeking condition, or of any merit in the service he had rendered.

"I accept thy offers of friendship," he said, "and very heartily, señor. But I vow to thee, when I helped thee out of the stream, I thought I should have had to give thee battle the next moment, as a sworn friend of Don Panfilo, the Biscayan."

"How little justice there was in that suspicion," said Amador, "you will know when I tell you, that, at this moment, next to the satisfaction of finding some opportunity to requite your true service, I know of no greater pleasure the saints could send me than a fair opportunity to cross swords with this ill-mannered general, in serious and mortal arbitrement. Know, señor, I am at this moment a captive escaped out of the hands of that most dishonourable and unworthy person, seeking my way, with my followers, under guidance of a certain conjurer called Botello, to the camp of the valiant señor Don Hernan Cortes: and I rejoice in this rencounter the more, because I am persuaded you are yourself a true friend of that much-respected commander."

"Ay, by my conscience! you may say so," cried the blithe cavalier; "and I would to heaven Cortes had many more friends that love him so well as myself. But come, señor; you are hard by his headquarters.—Yet, under favour, let us, before seeking

them, say a word to Botello, who, with your people, I perceive, has crossed the river."

A few steps of their horses brought the two cavaliers into contact with the travellers, with whom Don Amador beheld some half-a-dozen strangers, all of hidalgo appearance, on horseback, and dripping with wet like his new friend, but, unlike him, armed to the teeth with helm, mail, and buckler.

"How now, Botello, *mi querido*?" he cried, as he rode in among the party; "what news from my brother Narvaez? and what conjuration wert thou enacting, while he was scampering away before the bad weather?"

"Nothing but good, señor!" said Botello, baring his head, and bending it to the saddle.

The neophyte was surprised at this mark of homage in the enchanter, whom he had found, though neither rude nor presumptuous, not over-burthened with servility. Looking round to the other hidalgos, he discovered that they all kept their eyes upon his companion with looks of the deepest respect. At the same moment, and as the truth entered his mind, he caught the eye of his deliverer, and perceived at once, in this stately though unarmed cavalier, the person of the renowned Cortes himself. For a moment, it seemed as if the general were disposed to meet the disclosure with a grave and lofty deportment suitable to his rank; but as Don Amador raised his hand to his casque with a gesture of reverence, a smile crept over his visage, which was instantly succeeded by a good-humoured and familiar laugh.

"Thou seest, señor!" he cried, "we will be masking at times, even without much regard either for our enemies or the weather. But trust me, caballero, you are welcome; and doubtless not only to myself, but to these worthier gentlemen, my friends." And here the general pronounced the names of Sandoval, of De Morla, of De Leon, De Olid, and others,—all, as was afterwards proved, men of great note among the

invaders of Mexico. The neophyte saluted them with courtesy, and then, turning to the general, said:—

“I am myself called Amador de Leste, a poor hidalgo of Cuenza, a novice of the order of St. John of the Holy Hospital, and kinsman of the knight Gines Gabriel de Calavar, to seek whom am I come to this land of Mexico, and to the tents of your excellency.”

All bowed with great respect at this annunciation; and Cortes himself, half raising his drooping cap, said:—

“I doubly welcome the cavalier De Leste; and whether he come to honour me with the aid of his good sword, or to rob me of the true friendship of the knight Calavar, still am I most glad to see him: and glad am I that heaven has sent us a kinsman to watch by the side of the good knight. Señor,” continued the general, anticipating the questions of the neophyte, “if you will moderate your impatience a little, until I fulfil my duties with my mad friend here, the astrologer, I will be rejoiced in person to conduct you to your kinsman.”

The courteous manners of Hernan Cortes did more to mollify the ardour of the novice than could any degree of stateliness. He smothered his impatience, though it was burning with a stronger and an increasing flame; while the general proceeded to confer with the magician.

“How is it, Magico mio?” he cried. “I had a deserter this morning, who told me thou hadst been entrapped,—that my brother Narvaez had cudgelled thee with his own hands, and had some thoughts of hanging thee.”

“Such is, in part, the truth,” said Botello, tranquilly. “He was incensed at the stars, and struck me with his foot, because the Spirit of the Crystal gave not an answer to his liking.”

“Ay, indeed!” cried Cortes, curiously; “and Kalidon hath been speaking to him! What said Kalidon-Sadabath of Narvaez?”

“He said that, to-night,” replied Botello, with his

most solemn emphasis, "the foot of Cortes should be on the pyramid, and that, to-morrow, the Biscayan should do homage to his rival."

"Ay! and Kalidon told him all this?" said Cortes quickly, and, as Amador thought, angrily.

"He told only that which it was fitting the Biscayan should know," said Botello, significantly; "he told him that which brought his forces into the field to-day, so that they shall sleep more soundly for their labours to-night; and yet he told him, no blow should be struck in the field. He showed him many such things; but he told him not, in manner as it was written in the heaven and figured in the stone, that to-night should his enemy creep upon him as he slept blind and besotted, and while his best friends guided the assailant to his bedside."

"Ay, by my conscience!" cried Cortes, turning with meaning looks to his companions; "this Kalidon reads men's thoughts; for it was but an half hour since, when I beheld these delicate warriors turning their backs to the gust, that I vowed in my heart, I would, to-night, give them a lesson for their folly. What thinkest thou, son Sandoval? Will thy sunburnt, lazy fellows of the Rich City march to Zempoala by night?"

"Ay, by night or by day,—whenever they are bidden," said the sententious stripling, who, at this early period of the campaign and of his life, was not only the favourite of the general, but his second in fame. As Don Amador listened to his rough voice, and surveyed his bold and frank countenance adorned with a curly beard and hair, both of amber hue, he bethought him of the story of the heralds summoning him to surrender his post into their hands, and receiving an answer which they digested in the nets of the Tlamémé, on the road to Tenochtitlan.

"And thou, Juan Velasquez de Leon," said the general, turning to a young and powerfully framed cavalier, with a red beard and fierce countenance, who, besides being clad in a heavier coat of mail than

any other present, was more bountifully bedecked with golden chains, and who sat on a noble gray mare,—
“What sayest thou? Wilt thou play me a bout with Narvaez, the captain of thy kinsman, the governor Velasquez?”

“Ay, by my beard, I will!” replied De Leon, with a thick ferocious voice, suiting the action to the word, and wringing the rain-drops from the beard he had invoked; “for, though I love the governor, I love not his dog; and if this godly enchanter will assure me the stars are favourable to the enterprise, I will be the last man to say, our two hundred and fifty men are no match for the thousand curs that bark at the heels of the Biscayan.”

“It is written that, if we attack to-night, we shall prevail,” said Botello.

“If I am permitted to say anything in a matter of such importance,” said the neophyte, “I can aver, that if the people of Narvaez design to revel away this night, as they did the last, their commanders trifling with jugglers and rope-dancers, their guards sleeping on their posts, or straying away into the suburbs, as we discovered them when we escaped at dawn, it is an opinion which I formed on the spot, that some ten or fifteen score of resolute men may take them by surprise, and utterly vanquish them.”

“I respect the opinion of Don Amador,” said Cortes, “as well as the counsels of Kalidon-Sadabath and the stars, which have never yet told me a falsehood. But how comes it, Botello? Hast thou been flying since dawn? I cannot understand the necessity thou wert under to lead my worthy friend Don Amador so long a ramble; and moreover I perceive that, though yesterday thou wert constrained to trudge upon foot, thou art, to-day, master of a steed that may almost compare with Motacila, the wag-tail, of my son Sandoval.”

“I stole the beast from the captain of the watch, Salvatierra, while he kept guard over us at some distance in the fields,” said the magician, while all the

cavaliers laughed heartily at the explanation; "and as for the long day's travel,—when I found myself upon a good horse, I thought I could do no better than give the alarm, and draw a party in pursuit, and so entangle them among the woods, or wear them out with fatigue, that they should make little opposition when we came to attack their comrades at midnight."

"A shrewd and most laudable device!" cried Cortes, with unconcealed delight: "I have ever found thee as good a soldier as astrologer; and if the fates be as favourable to thee as I am myself, Botello, I can promise thee many an acre of maize fields or gold mountains, to recompense thy services."

"It must be as it is written," said Botello, gravely. "Many a peril shall encompass me; but I know that, in the worst, as it has been revealed to me, I shall be rescued out of it on the wings of eagles!"

"Amen!" cried Cortes, "for the day of miracles is not over. "If the señor De Leste," he continued, "claim to discharge his just anger for his imprisonment on my brother Narvaez, I will invite him to such a post of honour as shall be most likely to gratify his longings. And after that, if my very noble friend be inclined to exercise some of that skill in naval warfare which he has doubtless acquired among the knights of Rhodes, I will rejoice to entrust to him the attack upon the fleet of Cavallero."

"Señor," said Amador, "though I burn to assist you in the attack on Narvaez, I must first receive the command of my knight Don Gabriel. I am not so eager to draw sword upon the admiral; for know, valiant Don Hernan, I have discovered in Cavallero a kinsman of my mother. And señor," continued the neophyte, "I am now reminded of a message which he charged me to deliver to your excellency, wherein he begs to assure you, that, though fate has arrayed him as your enemy, he cannot forget the friendship of his former life."

"Ay!" cried Cortes briskly, "does the excellent admiral say me that?"

"He bade me also avow to you, that, though it became him not, as an officer of Velasquez, to hold any communications with you, except those of simple form and courtesy, he should be well rejoiced when heaven has removed the obstruction, and left him at liberty to meet you with former friendship and confidence."

"By my conscience," cried the general, turning to his officers, and exchanging meaning and joyous glances with them, "though these be tidings which Kalidon hath not revealed, yet are they of such pleasant import, that I shall ever thank Don Amador for being the bearer of them. Eh, my masters!" he exclaimed; "did I not tell you, when we left Tenochtitlan in gloom, we should return to it in merriment? that when we sank our rotten fleet among the surges of Villa Rica, heaven should send us another and a better? Let us move on, and spread these good news through the camp."——

The neophyte perceived, by the exultation of the general, that he had been in a manner cajoled by Cavallero; but he was not sorry to think his kinsman should rather prefer to command his fleet as the ally of Cortes than as the friend of Narvaez.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE sun was declining fast, when the travellers made their way to the camp of Cortes. The River of Canoes ran through a fertile valley; but this was of no great extent, and towards its upper termination, the scene of the events of the day, it was arid and broken with rocks. Immediately beyond the river, in a place made strong by rocks and bushes, impenetrable to cavalry, and affording the safest covert to

his arquebusiers and crossbowmen, the wary rival of Narvaez had pitched his quarters. Temporary huts of boughs and fresh-woven mats were seen withering among the green shadows, and from these ascended the smoke of fires, at which the soldiers were dressing their evening meal. But in advance of this primitive encampment, dripping with rain like their commanders, yet standing to their arms with a patient and grave constancy, as if still in readiness for an enemy, Don Amador beheld the forces of Cortes. They had a weather-beaten and veteran appearance; most of them were apparelled in the *escaupil*, cut in separate pieces resembling cumbrous plate-armour, and occasionally so hacked by the weapons of the natives, that the white lining gaped out somewhat ludicrously from its darker covering. Those arrayed in a better investment, had their morions and breast-plates commonly covered with rust, as if kept too much occupied with perils by night and day to allow leisure for burnishing them. Nevertheless, they looked like disciplined and experienced soldiers. Amador observed that few of them had fire-arms; the cross-bow, the sword, and the great lance of Chinantla, with its long double head of bright copper, were almost their only arms; but they handled them as if well acquainted with their value. Behind this advanced guard, under the shelter of the rocks and bushes, he remarked several officers, a few of them mounted, as well as divers groups of Indian menials; and, as his ear caught a low exclamation from the general, he turned his eyes, and beheld the object of his long and painful search.

Under the shadow of a tall tree, remote from the rest, and attended only by a single armed follower, —on a coal-black horse, heavily harnessed, which stood under his weight with a tranquillity as marble-like as his own, sat the knight of Calavar. He was in full armour, but the iron plates were rusted on his body, and in many places shattered. The plumes were broken and disordered on his helmet; the spear

lay at the feet of his steed; his buckler was in the hands of his attendant; and instead of the red tabard which was worn in a season of war by the brothers of his order, the black mantle of peace, with its great white cross, hung or drooped heavily from his shoulders. His beaver was up, and his countenance, wan and even ghastly, was fully revealed. The ravages of an untimely age were imprinted upon his aspect; yet, notwithstanding the hollow cheeks and grizzled beard, the brow furrowed with a thousand wrinkles, the lips colourless and contracted into an expression of deep pain, he presented the appearance of a ruin majestic in its decay. His hands were clasped, and lay on the pommel of the saddle, and, together with his whole attitude and air, indicated a state of the most profound and sorrowful abstraction. In truth, he seemed the prey of thoughts, many and deep; and it scarcely needed the simple and touching legend, *Miserere mei, Deus!* which usurped the place of a scutcheon or other device on his shield, to know that if fame sat on his saddle, sorrow rested under his bosom.

No sooner had the neophyte beheld this gloomy apparition, than, with a loud cry, he threw himself from his horse; and, rushing forward, he seized the relaxed hand of the figure, and pressed it to his lips with reverence and affection. But the knight, not yet roused from his revery, or struggling vainly with imperfect recollections, looked only into his face with a wistful stare.

"Patron and cousin! my friend and my father!" cried the novice, passionately, "do you not know me? I am Amador!"

"Amador!" muttered the knight, with a troubled look and a tone of perplexity. "Very well,—to-morrow—to-morrow!"

"He will not understand you now," said the general. "He is often in these trances."

"Mi padre! mi amigo!" cried the youth, vehemently, without regarding the interruption of the

commander, "will you not know me? I am Amador! Look,—here is Baltasar, old Baltasar! your servant and favourite, that has been at your side ever from the days of the Alpujarras to the fall of Rhodes."

"The Alpujarras!" echoed the knight, with a deep sigh. "Wo is me!—miserere mei, Deus!"

"He will recollect us *now*," said Baltasar, who had also descended, and who testified his fidelity by a tear that glittered in his ancient eye. "I never knew that word fail to call him out of his mood, though I have often known it fling him into one.—Master! I am Baltasar; and here is your honour's kinsman, Don Amador!"

"Ay! is it so indeed? I thought I was dreaming," said the knight: "Art thou here indeed, my son Amador? Give me thy brows, for I am rejoiced to find thee in the world again." And stooping and flinging his arms round his neck, he kissed the forehead of the neophyte, with a parental affection.

"This, my masters," said Cortes, in an under voice, "is not a spectacle for us. Let us pass on, and arrange proceedings for the attack." And, with his suite, he instantly departed.

"And how dost thou prosper at Almeria?" continued Calavar, mildly, and without any incoherence of manner, though it was evident his thoughts were far away. "Hast thou found me any brave hearts, who will march with me against the infidels of Barbary?"

"Dear knight and patron," said Amador, "we are not now in Spain, but in the heathen lands of Mexico."

"Ay! Dios mio, I had forgotten that!" said Don Gabriel, with a bewildered air.

"Whither I have come," said the novice, "to beg your pardon for my negligence and desertion, and never more to part from your side."

"I remember me now," said the knight, slowly and sadly. "Wo is me! a sore infirmity is on my brain; and sometimes I am not master of my own acts. But *I remember thee*, my friend: I remember that, in an

evil hour of forgetfulness, I forsook thee, to come to this unknown land. But I beg thy pardon, my son;—the dark mood took me from thee, and in truth I knew it not.”

The tears came into the eyes of Amador, as he listened to the self-accusation of his kinsman, and remembered how much the blame should rest on his own momentary defection.

“It is *I* that must bear the reproach, and *I* that must look for forgiveness,” he cried. “But I will never need to be rebuked or forgiven again; for I swear, dear kinsman, I will follow thee truly now, until my death.”

“And thou hast left the fair hills of Spain, thy true friends, and thy lady-love,” said Calavar, with a mournful voice, “to follow me over the wide seas and the hostile deserts? I welcome thee with gratitude, for thy love is great, and thy task will be bitter. I welcome thee well, Amador, but surely it is with sorrow; for I heard thou hadst won the love of a noble and virtuous lady; and heaven forbid I should not lament to sever thee, in thy youth, from the enjoyment of thy affection.”

A flush of shame and pain mantled the countenance of the devoted novice, as he replied,—

“I confess I have much need of thy forbearance, dear knight; but they did me wrong, who said I could forget thee for the love of woman. I acknowledge no duty that is not to thee, and no passion but that of serving thee with constancy and truth. But I am sent to thee not more by the impulses of my own love, than by the commands of his most eminent highness, the Grand Master, who leaves it to thyself, as a well-beloved and much-trusted follower of the holy order, whether thou wilt remain fighting the infidels of this new world, or return at thy pleasure to the island Malta, which his majesty the king and emperor, Don Carlos of Spain and Austria, hath promised to bestow upon the good knights, the defenders of Christendom.”

"Among the infidels of the new world, then," said Calavar, casting his eyes meekly to heaven; "for I know that what poor service I may yet render the faith, must be rendered soon; and if God uphold me, I will render it truly and well. But thou, Amador my son, my faithful and my beloved! I adjure thee that, when my task is finished, thou return to the land of thy birth, and give thyself to a life of virtue, and, if possible, of peace. Watch well the creatures that are in thy breast, for among them are devils, which, if thou do not chain them, will rend thee. Check thy wrath, fetter thy fury," continued the knight, vehemently; "and when thou drawest thy sword, call on God, that it may not fall unjustly; for when blood is shed that should not have been shed, it lives on the soul for ever—Ay de mi! Miserere mei, Deus!"

Don Amador feared, as he listened with a superstitious reverence to the adjurations of the knight, that he was about to relapse into his gloomy stupor; but he was deceived. The lips of Calavar muttered on for a moment, as if continuing to repeat the solemn and impassioned appeal of the psalmist: and then, making the sign of the cross on his breast, he turned again to the novice with a kind of dismal cheer, and said:—

"I welcome thee again to this land, Amador. And Baltasar—What now, Baltasar? is it possible I should forget thee? I am glad to look upon thy loyal countenance; thine old friend Marco will rejoice to fight again at thy side.—If I do not err, this is thy henchman, Lazaro:—I greet thee well, Lazaro: be very true to thy master, and forget not thy religion. And this youth that rests behind thee—if he be thy follower, my son, he shall share thy welcome."

"I recommend the youth Fabueno to thy kindness," said Amador, well pleased to perceive his kinsman so collected. "He is the secretary of the admiral Cavallero, who claims to be related to your honour, and sends you the assurance of his love. I have been constrained, without yet knowing the pleasure of his

excellency, to receive the youth into my protection; and this I did the more cheerfully, that he was my fellow-sufferer in the camp of Narvaez, and did, for my sake, very courageously expose himself to the painful shot of a cross-bow, which now maims his right arm."

"If he have suffered for thee, my friend, I will not forget him," said the knight; "and I am rejoiced for his sake that now, in this season of peace, we may cure his wound before we call upon him to endure another."

The countenance of Don Amador fell; he thought the knight's dream of peace denoted that he was sinking again into abstraction.

"Call this not the season of peace," he cried. "The commander Cortes is resolute to fall upon his enemy, Narvaez, the enemy of honour; and it needs we should burnish up our arms, to give him help."

Calavar looked seriously at the youth, and touching his black mantle with an expressive gesture, said:—

"It is the time of peace, my son,—the time of peace for those that follow the good St. John. I remember me now, that Cortes came down from the mountains, to fight the man Narvaez and his host: but these are not infidels, but Christians."

"Cousin," said the cavalier, warmly, "though this man have the name, yet do I very much doubt if he possess any of the religion of a Christian; and I have to assure you, I have endured such causeless indignities at his hands, such as direct insult, violent seizure, and shameful imprisonment, as can only be washed away with his blood."

"Wo's me! wo's me!" cried the knight: "the blood that is poured in anger, will not flow like water; it will not dry like water; nor will water, though blessed by the holy priest in the church, wash its crust from the hand! Thou seest," he cried, extending his gauntleted member, and gazing piteously into the face of his heated kinsman—"thou seest, that though, for thrice five years, I have washed it in brook and font,

in the river that flows from the land of the Cross, and in the brine of the sea, it oozes still from between the scales, like a well that must trickle for ever, and will not be hidden.—Thou art very wroth with me, heaven!—*Miserere mei, Domine!*”

Don Amador was greatly shocked and grieved, that his imprudent obstinacy had so nearly again recalled the distraction of his kinsman. But it needed not many expressions of gentleness and submission, to divert the current of his thoughts. The appearance of the young and devoted follower had come to the spirit of the penitent knight, like a cool breeze over the temples of a fevered man; and having once been roused from his gloom, he could not be long insensible to the excitement of his presence. He cast an eye of kindness and affection on the youth, and obeying, as one who had been long accustomed to such control, the humble suggestion of Marco, he turned to the tents of the encampment.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE sun had not yet set, when the ray, stealing through the vapours that gathered among the distant peaks, beheld the señor Cortes and his little army crossing the River of Canoes. A quarter-league above his encampment was the very ford which had given him passage, when, with a force short of five hundred men, and a few score of wild Totonacs, taken with him less as warlike auxiliaries than as beasts of burthen and hostages for the fidelity of their tribe, he set out to cross mountains of snow and fire, rocky deserts and foaming rivers, in the invasion of an empire, whose limits, as well as its resources and power, were utterly unknown. Here the stream was more shallow than at that spot where it had been the fate of Don Amador to ford it; the flood had also in a

measure subsided; and while the mounted individuals passed it with ease, the waters came not above the breasts of the footmen. Don Amador rode at the side of his knight, and though chafing with discontent at the thought that he should share no part in the brave deeds of the coming night, and be but a looker-on, while strangers were robbing him of his vengeance, yet did he conceal his troubles, lest the exhibition of them should give new pain to his unhappy kinsman. The three attendants were behind, and Fabueno, though evidently regarding the knight Calavar with a deep and superstitious awe, rode not far from his patron.

The rivulet was crossed, and the hardy desperadoes who were now marching with spears to attack a foe of five times their own number, fortified with cannon on an eminence, gathered about their leader as he sat his horse on the bank, as if expecting his final instructions and encouragement. He surveyed them not only with gravity but with complacency, and smiling as if in derision of their weakness,—for they did not number much over two hundred and fifty men,—he said, with inimitable dryness:—

“My good friends and companions! you are now about to fight a battle, the issue of which will depend very much on your own conduct; and I have to inform you, that if, as seems reasonable enough, you are vanquished, there is not a man of you that shall not hang at some corner of Zempoala to-morrow!”

A murmur running through the whole crew, marked the disgust of all at this unsavoury exordium.

“The reasons for this opinion,” continued the leader, gravely, “both as to the probable fate of the battle and of yourselves in the event of your being beaten, I shall have no trouble in speaking; only that, like one who knows how to use the butt as well as the blade of his lance, I shall discourse first of the hinder part of my argument; that is to say, of the very great certainty with which a gibbet shall reward every man who, this night, handles his weapon

too tenderly. Know, then, my good brothers, that, at this moment, though you very loyally and truly avow yourselves the soldiers of his majesty, our king and master, it hath somehow entered into the head of the general Narvaez, the lieutenant of his majesty's governor, to consider you as villain rebels and traitors;—an imputation so exceedingly preposterous and eccentric, that, were we in a Christian land, you should not be required to deny it; but, standing as you do, with no better present judge than your accuser, it is certain your innocence could not be made apparent to his majesty, until after the gallinazas had picked the last morsel from your bones; at which time, as I think you will agree with me, a declaration of your true loyalty would not be a matter of much consequence to any of you."

Again a murmur, accompanied by sundry ferocious looks and savage interjections, testified the discontent of the adventurers.

"What I say, is the truth," continued Cortes, adopting the scowl which darkened the visages of all, extending his drawn sabre above his head, and speaking with a fierce and resolute indignation: "In the face of that heaven, which has seen us, for its honour and glory, devote ourselves to pain and peril, landing friendless and unaided, save by its own divine countenance, on the shores of bitter and murderous barbarians, overthrowing their bloody idols, and even in the chief sanctuaries of their diabolic superstition, on the palaces of their emperors and the pyramids of their gods, erecting the standard of the crucified Saviour,—I say, even in the face of that heaven that has seen us do these things that will immortalize us on earth and glorify us in heaven, the man Narvaez has dared to call us traitors to our king and faith, has denounced us more as infidel Moors, than as Christian Spaniards, and declaring war upon us with sword, fire, and free rope, has sworn to give us to the death of caitiffs and felons!"

The answer to this passionate appeal was loud and

furious. The cavaliers clashed their swords upon their bucklers, the footmen drove their spears into the soil, and, foaming with rage, swore they would thus answer the calumny in the heart of their enemy.

"Does it need I should give you more proof of the bloody and insolent violence of Narvaez?" said the general. "He hath set a price upon my head, and on the head of my loyal friend Sandoval, as though we were vile bandits and assassins."

"What needs more words?" cried the young captain, thus referred to. "He shall have my head for the three thousand crowns, if he can take it."

"How it happens he has not thought any other head in this company worth buying," said the commander, with an adroit bitterness, "is an insult he must himself explain."

There was not a cavalier present that did not swear, in his heart, he would avenge such forbearance with the full swing of his weapon.

"It must be now manifest," continued Cortes, with composure, "that defeat will be the warrant and assurance of a gallows-death to all that may render themselves prisoners. And having convinced you of this, I may now betake me to the first article of my discourse, as one that concerns the possibility of your defeat. It is quite probable," he went on to say, with an irony more effectual than the most encouraging argument of hope, "that being but two hundred and fifty strong, and enfeebled by your divers battles with the Tlascalans, and the knavish herds of Cholula, you will be easily beaten by a thousand men, who, besides being fond of the valiant diversions of Indian dancers, and the martial delights of house shelter and soft beds, have hardened their bodies, and perfected their knowledge of arms, among the plantain patches of Cuba; and who, in addition, are of so magnanimous a turn, that they would, the half of them, at this moment, rather join your ranks than draw sword against you. But why do I talk thus? A live dog is better than a dead lion,—and a score of waking men,

better than a hundred sleepers. Know, then, ye grumbling and incensed companions, if ye *will* conquer this man that comes with a rope, ye may. Botello hath shown me how the stars are propitious, and how the Spirit of the Crystal hath promised us success. Heaven fights on our side, for we fight for heaven;—St. Paul will be with us, for we contend for the privilege to convert the heathen;—and Santiago will not forget us, for with every thrust of our spears, we strike a brave blow for Spain!”

“Let us on!” cried all, with a shout of exultation; “We will conquer!”

“Nay!” cried the general, with a mock discretion. “Rush not too eagerly on danger. Let us wait a day for those two thousand brown varlets of Chinantla, whom the loitering Barrientos conducts hitherward; for though it be somewhat dishonourable to share a triumph with Indian soldiers, yet will they doubtless make that triumph the more certain.”

“We will win it ourselves!” cried the excited desperadoes.

“Ye will have hotter work than ye think,” said Cortes; “and surely I believe ye will take to your heels, like the old Arrowauks of Cuba, leaving me to die at the pyramid—For I swear you, if ye force me to conduct you to Zempoala, I will not come from it alive, unless as its master!”

“Let it be proclaimed death to any one that turns his back!” cried an hundred voices.

“Ay then, ye mad valiant rogues! ye shall have your wish!” cried Cortes, yielding to an excitement he had not easily suppressed, rising in his stirrups and looking round him with that fiery and fanatical enthusiasm which was the true secret of his greatness, and which left him not for a moment even in the darkest and most perilous hour of his enterprise. “We will march to Zempoala, with God in our hearts, and the name of the Holy Spirit on our lips; and remembering that, under such influence, we scattered the tens of thousands that beset us on the plains

of Tlascala, we will show this dog of a Biscayan what it is to oppose the arms of heaven,—Amen !”

And *Amen* was uttered fiercely and frantically by the adventurers, as they prepared to follow their leader. But a wave of his hand checked their ardour for a moment ; a few words explained the order of attack, and the duties of the several leaders, of whom the young Sandoval was appointed to the most honourable and dangerous task,—to seize the artillery by a coup-de-main, and thus give passage for De Leon in the assault of the towers, while Cortes himself should stand by with a chosen body of reserve, to witness the valour of his captains, and give assistance where it might be needed. Again, when the announcement of these orders seemed to have taken the restraint from the ardour of his followers, the general checked them. A huge and rugged cross of cotton-wood raised its mouldering bulk before them on their path,—a holy landmark, raised by the piety of the invader, nine months before, while on his march to Tenochtitlan.

“ Under the cross will we commend ourselves to God, and prepare ourselves for battle,” said the leader, riding forward, and dismounting. His example was followed by all the cavaliers, who, together with the footmen, knelt upon the dank grass, and baring their heads, prepared for the rites of penitence and absolution. None knelt with a more devout submission than the knight of Calavar ; none exposed with more humility their youthful heads to the evening breeze than did he his silver-touched locks and withered temples ; and none, as the holy chaplain dictated the act of general confession and contrition, echoed his words with a more fervent sincerity. Under the rude crucifix in the desert, knelt those men who were about to imbrue their hands in blood, and that the blood of their countrymen.

The words of penitence were said, the rite of absolution pronounced ; and the followers of Cortes rose to their feet, with their hearts full of conquest.

But before the helm was buckled and the horse mounted, there came on the twilight air, from the towers of Zempoala, the sound of the vesper-bell of Narvaez.

"It is long since we have worshipped at the sound of a Christian bell," said Cortes, again flinging himself on his knees. "God speaks to us in the omen. We have not forgotten, among infidel savages, that we are Christians!"

As if those tones were rung in the chapel of a brother, instead of the barracks of an enemy, and as if to join that enemy in one act of piety, before springing upon him, sword in hand, all again knelt down; and the Ave-Marias of two hostile armies, on the brink of engagement, went up to heaven together.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HARD by to the town of Zempoala ran a little brook, coursing through agreeable meadows, and here and there skirted by green forests. In a wood that overshadowed this current,—but at the distance of a quarter-league from it,—lay concealed the forces of Hernan Cortes, waiting patiently for the time when the squadrons of Narvaez, satiated with the sports of their tawny neighbours, should, additionally, recompense the exploits of the day with the oblivion of slumber. They had watched with contempt, and with joy (for they perceived in such spectacle, a symptom of the infatuated security of their enemies,) the great fire that lighted the diversions of the evening, blazing on the pyramid, until it began to die away, as did many of the sounds of revelry, that, in the still hour of the night, were borne to their ears. But it was not until their spies brought word that the last brand was flinging its decaying lustre over the

eaves of the towers, that they were bidden to arise, cross the stream, and array for battle.

In deep silence—for they knew there were sentinels on the path—they reached and forded the rivulet: trooper and footman passed over, and were ranked under their several leaders, and all seemed in readiness for the assault.

Still, however, the knight of Calavar sat motionless on his sable steed, as if all unaware of the tempest of war that was brewing; and Don Amador beheld, with a pang of unutterable grief and vexation, the departure of those bold spirits to the scene of strife and honour, in which he was to have no share. As he sat fuming and frowning, now on the point of urging his kinsman for permission to follow, now reproaching himself in bitter reprehension, as if the unuttered wish might recall some of those thoughts of misery which so often perplexed the brain of the crazed knight, he heard the foot-fall of a horse, and perceived a cavalier riding towards him. To his grief was superadded a pang of shame, as he saw in this individual the person of Cortes himself, and conceived the object of his return.

"I am loath to see that the noble Calavar still abides by the black mantle," he said, as if content to waste no arguments on the knight; "but if the very valiant Don Amador de Leste be desirous to repay upon Narvaez the injuries done to his honour, or if he be minded to bestow upon me that great favour whereof he spoke on the River of Canoes, there can never come a better opportunity than this present: and for the services he may render me personally, as well as a most loyal cause, this night, by leading his followers with me to the pyramid, I shall ever remain in thankful remembrance."

The words stuck in the throat of the novice, as he replied, "I am the slave of my kinsman: I burn to follow you—but my knight must command."

He turned to Calavar, with a look of despair; but

the night which concealed it from the eye, could not preserve the reproach from the ear.

"Stay thou by my side, Amador, my son," said Calavar, sorrowfully; "and let no man that follows thee or me, think to draw his sword this night; for we are the followers of St. John, and may not contend with a Christian, except in self-preservation."

"God shield thee, sir knight," cried the general, anxiously; "every man who strikes with us to-night, strikes for his own life: victory preserves us, and defeat conducts us to the scaffold; and I am free to confess to *thee*, what I dared not speak to my companions, that unless every man does his duty, and God looks kindly upon all, I know not how soon we may be under the foot of our enemy."

"I have not refused thee my sword," said the knight calmly, "when an infidel stood in thy path; nor will I, when such opposition is again made."

"But thy noble and valiant kinsman, and thy people," said the general, hastily: "they long to divide the honour of this combat, and they have no vows to restrain them. Every sword to-night is as valuable as a Cid's right arm."

"Tempt them not! delude them not into the commission of a great sin, that will fill their future days with remorse," said Calavar, earnestly. But before he could add any thing further, the report of an arquebuse from the front filled the forest with its roar, and Cortes, plunging the spur into his charger, was instantly borne out of sight.

"For God's sake!" cried Amador, with despairing entreaty, "let us cross the brook, and follow these brave men a little, though we join not in the battle."

"I will not refuse thee so much as that," said the knight, with some little animation, which was perhaps caused by the martial associations of the explosion. "It is not forbidden us at least to look on; and by so doing, heaven may perchance allow us the happiness to save some wretched life."

In a moment the little party had crossed the brook,

and spurring their horses hard, followed, as they thought, in the path of their late companion. But, though the moon frequently displayed her resplendent visage through loop-holes in the scudding clouds, the many clumps of trees that dotted over the meadows in the environs of Zempoala, so confounded the vision, that they had reached the very suburbs without yet obtaining a view of the adventurers. Indeed it had so happened, that not being provided with a guide acquainted with the various approaches to the town, they fell upon one entirely different from that trodden by the assailants. Not doubting however that they were following closely upon their rear, they pushed boldly on through a deserted street, echoing loudly to the clatter of their steps; nor did they discover their error until, to their great surprise, they found themselves issuing upon the great square, in full view of the temple.

They paused an instant in confusion.—No tumult of shouts or fire-arms came from the sanctuaries; a deep silence brooded over the city as with wings; in fact, no sound broke the solemn tranquillity of midnight, save one which was the evidence and representative of peace. The faint twangling of a lute, mingling with the sweet tones of a youthful voice, came from the chief tower; to hear which the sentinels had doubtless stolen from their posts among the cannon, which were now seen frowning in solitude on the verge of the platform.

Before Don Amador could take time to ponder on the infatuated recklessness of the Biscayan general, or bethink him much of the young Moor of Fez, whose voice it was, he did not doubt, that sounded so plaintively from the tower, and which, by some inexplicable principle of association, instantly wafted his spirit to Granada, and wrung it with a sharp and sudden anguish,—the clattering of a horseman riding furiously up a neighbouring street, roused him from the imperfect revery; and his heart waxed hot and fierce, as the loud cry, *Arma! Arma! A las armas!*

burst from the lips of the flying sentry. In a moment of time this faithful watchman was seen dashing across the square; and as he flung himself from his steed, and rushed up the steps of the pyramid, still shouting the alarm at the top of his voice, there was heard another sound following at his heels, in which the practised ear of the neophyte detected the tramp of footmen, pursuing with the speed of death. In a moment, also, ceased the lute and the voice of the singer; torches flashed suddenly from the doors of the towers; and as their light shot over the open square, there was seen a hurried mass of men running in confusion over the area of the pyramid. But the same flash that revealed this spectacle, disclosed also the wild figures and hostile visages of the men of Cortes, rushing to the assault, and sending forth a shout, that made the whole town ring and tremble to its foundations.

It was not in the nature of man to see these sights and hear these sounds with composure; and accordingly Don Amador had no sooner dismounted and flung the reins of Fogoso into the hands of Lazaro, than he perceived the knight of Calavar, on foot, at his side. He turned an inflamed, and perhaps a rebellious eye on his kinsman; but the countenance of Calavar was bent on his own, with a ghastly placidity; and as the hand of the knight was laid on his shoulder, as if to restrain his fury, the youth groaned in bitterness and anger.

"By heaven!" he cried, "I see the very face of Sandoval, as he darts at the steps!—O my friend! my father!"—

"Shed no blood!" said the knight, with a hollow, but stern and vehement voice. "The avenger will follow thee by night and by day, at prayers and in battle—Shed no blood!"

"We are alone, too!" cried Amador, with ungovernable fire, as he found that Marco, Lazaro, and Baltasar, after flinging the reins of their horses round the shrubs that grew at the corner, had vanished from

his side. "Even the varlets may strike at the knave who has wronged me; yet may I not raise my hand!"

"Shed no blood!" reiterated Don Gabriel, in a sort of frenzy: "Forget thy rage, forswear thy fury! slay thyself, but strike not in vengeance!—*Miserere mei, Deus!*"

All these wild words, though they take moments to record, were the utterance of an instant; and while the piteous plaint of the knight Calavar still winged its way to heaven, and before Amador could reply a single word, the shouts of the assailants, as they rushed up the steps, were met by the roar of a cannon discharged by a skilful hand, illumining tree and tower with a hideous glare, and flinging death and havoc among their ranks. But the foot of desperation was on the earth of the temple; and before another piece of artillery could answer to the hollow thunder of the hills, the spear of Chinantla was drinking the blood of the cannoniers. At this moment, and while even the young Fabueno grasped the sword in his feeble hands, and turned his pale face to the battle,—while Amador gnashed his teeth with rage,—there rose from the platform, above the shouts and yells of the combatants, a shriek as though of a woman struck by the spear of some ferocious dastard.—If the blow of an enemy had fallen upon his cheek, the young cavalier could not have started from the grasp of his kinsman, and drawn his sword, with a more irresistible impulse. But, in truth, the same cry that inflamed his own brain, went also to the heart of Calavar; and when he dashed up the pyramid with furious haste, as if to the rescue of a sworn friend, the knight of Rhodes, drawing his weapon, followed fiercely after.

The scene that awaited the neophyte on the platform, though composed of men writhing together in thick affray, did not dwell an instant on his eye. It had caught, as if by providential direction, in the very chaos of combat, the figure that had sent forth the cry of affliction; and as he bestrid the body of Ab-

dalla, and caught up the childish minstrel from his person, he shivered with a single stroke of his sabre, the spear that, in a moment, would have pinned to the earth both father and son.

"Dog of a conjurer!" he cried, as he discovered the person of Botello in the discomfited slayer, and prepared, while the terrified stripling clung convulsively to his body, to shield him from the weapons of others; "dog of a conjurer! thy cruelty cancels thy services, and I will cleave thee for a viper!"

"What is written is written—God be thanked! I knew not 'twas a boy." And in an instant Botello vanished among the combatants.

"I thought thee a woman, thou scared varlet!—Cheer up, Abdalla!—they shall not harm thee.—Father! my knight and my father! wilt thou protect my boy, that I have saved, and his sire, the Christian Moor?" cried Amador, as he perceived the knight stand staring wildly at his side. "I leave them to thee.—Surely there may be other lives to save!" And thus concealing his excitement in what seemed an excuse for his disobedience, and without waiting for an answer, he rushed instantly into the thickest of the combat.

CHAPTER XIX.

WHEN Don Amador fled from the side of Calavar, the instinct of his vengeance carried him to the spot where it seemed most likely to be gratified. The chief tower, as well as the two others, was invested; but in the crowd of musketeers and crossbowmen who stood valiantly at its door, repelling the assailants, he not only heard the voice, but very plainly perceived the tall figure, of his enemy, Don Panfilo. Infuriated at the sight, he rushed forwards, and calling out with an indiscreet vigour that drew both the

attention of that general and the thickest shots of his companions, he quickly found himself in a situation of great jeopardy. Though bullet and cross-bow shaft fell harmless from his mail of proof, the thrust of some half a score partisans aimed at his shining and exposed breast, beat down the insufficient defence of his buckler, and hurled him instantly to the ground. But the voice with which he had challenged the Biscayan had been heard by friends as well as enemies; and as his faithful Lazaro dashed aside the most threatening weapon, the shield of another friend was extended over his body, and he found himself raised by the hand of Cortes.

"I knew my valiant friend would not desert me, this night!" cried the commander. "But risk thyself no further. We will sack these towers, without the loss of so invaluable a life.—What ho! yield thee, Narvaez!" he exclaimed, with a voice heard above the din; "yield thee up a prisoner, or thine own cannon shall bury thee under the temple!"

"*El Espíritu Santo*, and on!" cried fifty eager men, as they rushed by their leader, and drove the followers of Narvaez into the sanctuary. They vanished; but the pikes and muskets bristling through the curtain, checked the audacity of the besiegers at the door; and the voice of Sandoval was heard exclaiming from behind, "Clear for the cannon, and stand aside!" when suddenly a fire-brand dashed by some unseen hand to the roof, lodged among the palm-leaves, and in a moment the whole superstructure was in flames.

"Spare your powder, and stand by for the rats!" cried Lazaro, for it was he who had achieved this cunning and well-timed exploit; "Basta! So we catch rabbits in La Mancha!"

"An hundred crowns to the knave of the fire-brand!" cried Cortes, exultingly;—"and three thousand paid in gold, to him who lays the first hand on Narvaez!—Burn, fire! smother, smoke! the night is ours!"

"Ay! Don Panfilo! I await thee" exclaimed Amador, as the rushing descent of beams and embers drove the besieged from the temple, and again discovered the person of his wronger. He sprang towards the commander, who, however hot and foolish of temper, now bore himself like a courageous soldier, and struck fast and fiercely at his foes, while shouting good cheer to his friends. But before Don Amador could well reach him, he saw the unfortunate man struck down, and in the act of being transfixed by many spears. Magnanimity—for the fury of a brave man cannot live without opposition—took the place of wrath; and no sooner did he hear Don Panfilo exclaim, with a piteous voice, "*Dios mio! I am slain, and mine eye is struck out forever!*" than he rushed to his assistance, and seemed resolved to perform in his service the same act of valour with which he had befriended Abdalla. Again, too, as he caught an outstretched arm, did he find himself confronted with Botello: but this time the magician's arm was extended in the office of mercy; and as he raised the vanquished general, and displayed his countenance, covered with blood oozing from his right eye, he exclaimed with a triumphal solemnity: "I saw him blindfold; and lo, his eye is blinded with blood!—Victory! victory! A Dios, á Cristo, y al Espíritu Santo, gracias! gloria y gracias! Amen!—Victory!"

Loud was the shout with which the besiegers responded to the cry of the magician; and the disordered and unavailing shots from the other towers were lost in the uproar of voices exclaiming, "Viva Cortes, el soldado verdadero! Viva Don Carlos, el rey! Viva el Espíritu Santo! el Espíritu Santo santísimo!"

"Away with him!" cried Cortes. "Guard thy prisoner, magico mio,—thou hast won the prize.—Leave shouting, ye rebel hounds, and bring up the cannon!—What ho, ye rogues of the towers! will ye have quarter and friendship, or flames and cannon-

balls? Point the ordnance against the flank towers! Bury me the knaves that resist us longer.—In the name of God and the emperor, fire!”

But this measure was unnecessary. The shout of triumph, with which the assailants proclaimed the capture of the Biscayan, was carried to every ear in the adoratories; and it was at this instant that the besieged, as much bewildered by the surprise as discomfited by the fury of the attack, disheartened, too, by the misadventure of their general, looked from the loops of their strong-holds, and made that famous blunder of converting the host of *cucujos*, or fire-flies, into a multitude of match-locks; whereby their hearts were turned to water, and their assurance of victory humbled to the hope of capitulation.

At the very moment that Don Amador, foiled in the gratification of his passions in one quarter, turned to indulge them in another, and rushed with increasing animation to that tower, around which he heard many voices echoing the name of Salvatierra, he beheld that worthy captain issue from the door, fling his weapon to the earth, and stretch out his arms, as if beseeching for quarter.

“Oh thou thing of a white liver!” cried the young cavalier, with extreme disgust, “hast thou not the spirit to strike me one blow? I would I had brought thee the boy Jacinto, to inflame thy valour a little. Thou wilt fight me a boy!”

As the neophyte thus gave vent to his indignation, he felt his arm touched, and, turning round, he beheld the secretary, holding a sword ornamented with drops of blood, and otherwise looking as though he had commenced his pupilage in a manner that would not shame his instructor.

“Well done, Fabueno!” he exclaimed, encouragingly: “thou lookest like a soldier already. I am glad thine arm is so strong.”

“I struck but one blow, señor, and I believe I have killed a man! God forgive me!” he cried, in more affright than elation,—“I am not sure I did right; for

the very moment I struck the blow, my arm twinged with a most horrible pang; which was perhaps a judgment on me, for striking a man who had done me no wrong."

"These things must not be thought of too much," said Don Amador, hastily; "in battle, we must look upon all opponents as our sworn enemies, at least so long as they keep to their feet. But the battle is over—I will have thy wound looked to by some better surgeon than this crazy conjurer."

"Señor," said Fabueno, "I sought you out, not to trouble you with my pains, but to recall you to the knight, your kinsman, who is in some difficulty with certain men, about the Moor, that may end in blows, and never a henchman but old Marco by the good Don Gabriel."

Amador followed the secretary instantly, and found his kinsman—not unprotected, however, for both Marco and Baltasar were at his side—surrounded by several men speaking with loud and fierce voices, among which he quickly detected the tones of the master of the Incarnation.

"I say, and I aver," cried this man, as the neophyte approached, "the two knaves, both father and son, are my slaves, as can be proved by these runaway men, my sailors; and no man shall have them from me, without payment of my price."

"Ay! we can bear witness to that," said his companions. "These are true pagan slaves, captured in a fight at sea, out of a Barbary pirate;—very honest, lawful slaves: and though we have deserted our captain, to fight these other pagans, we will not see him robbed of his property."

To the great joy of Don Amador, he observed that his kinsman was calm and collected, and though he spoke with his usual voice of affliction, his answer was still full of dignity and gravity.

"The Moor that is a Christian cannot be enslaved; neither can he be bought and sold—and these claim to be both *Gazies*, Christian *Moriscos*. I guard them

at the desire of their protector, who can assuredly support their claims; in which event thou must cease thy importunity, and think of them no more."

"They are my slaves, and I will have them!" said the master, ferociously. "I meet nothing but robbers in these lands; but robber peasant, or robber knight, neither shall wrong me for naught."

"Thou base and covetous cur!" said Amador, advancing before the sailor, "if thou usest no better language, I will strike thy head from thy shoulders! Dost thou remember me, sirrah? Did not the admiral satisfy thee in this matter? and dost thou follow me still, like a blood-hound, after the prey that is not thine?"

"Calm thy rage, son Amador," said the knight. "Thou hast done a good act to-night, in saving the lives of this poor child and his father, and thou shalt not want my aid to preserve their freedom. But let us not quarrel: enough Christian blood has already been shed, and a woful sight will the sun see, when he presently rises. Let us go before Cortes: he shall judge between this man, and these creatures whom thou hast rescued from destruction."

"I ask nothing but justice and my right," grumbled the master, somewhat pacified by the angry bearing of the neophyte—for this was a more commanding argument than the mildness of Calavar.

He fell back, and without further contention, though with a lowering look, followed the two cavaliers and the Moriscos in search of Don Hernan.

CHAPTER XX.

THE morn, which by this time was breaking over the sea, was ushered in with a thousand sounds of triumph; and the drums of the vanquished rolled in concert with the trumpets of the victors. In truth, saving to the wounded and broken-spirited Biscayan,

and some few cavaliers who had remained faithful to him and to his employer, the change of others from rivalry to subjection, was a circumstance more of gratulation than regret; as was proved by the ready alacrity with which they betook themselves to the audience of their conqueror.

In the gilded and feather-broidered chair in which he had first seen the person of the unlucky Narvaez, Don Amador de Leste now perceived the figure of the Conqueror, a rich mantle of an orange hue thrown over his shoulders, his head bare, but his heel resting on a certain footstool or ball of variegated feathers, and altogether preserving an appearance of singular, but superb state. His valiant and well-beloved officers stood ranked on either side, and on either side, also, his resolute followers were displayed, as if performing the duties of a body-guard. In this situation of pride, he prepared to receive the congratulations or the griefs of his enemies; and, as if to add still further to the imposing magnificence of the ceremony, at that moment, as a wild roar of conches and drums mingling with the wilder shouts of human beings, burst over the city, a great multitude of native warriors from the province of Chinantla, marching in regular and alternate files of spearmen and archers, and glittering with feathers and brilliant cotton garments, strode upon the square, and dividing upon either side of the pyramid, halted only when they had surrounded it with their warlike and most romantic array. The spectacle was no more surprising to the people of Narvaez than to those friends of Cortes, who had not before looked upon an Indian army, among whom Don Amador was one. He regarded the picturesque barbarians with much admiration; though his eye soon wandered from them to dwell upon the leader, and the ceremonious part he was then enacting. He sat in his chair like a monarch, and though, at times, when some conquered cavalier *more* honoured, or better beloved, than others, *approached*, he arose, and even extended his arms with

a friendly embrace, in the greater number of instances he was content to pronounce some simple words of compliment, and present his hand to be kissed,—a mark of homage reverentially rendered by all.

It did not become Don Amador, though he surveyed these proceedings with some little contempt, as indicating on the one side, too much arrogance, and on the other, too much humility, to interrupt them; in which persuasion, he stood patiently aside, with his company, watching until such moment when he might approach with propriety. Being thus a witness of the degree of friendliness which characterized the receptions, as well as the many petitions which the comers made to be accredited and enrolled among the general's true friends and followers, he began to lose somewhat of the wonder with which he had regarded the suddenness and facility of the victory. It was apparent, that most of the officers of Narvaez had long made up their minds to devote themselves to the service of his enemy; and when they had paid their compliments to Don Hernan, they dropped among his officers, as if joining old friends and comrades.

It gave the neophyte some pain, when at the conclusion of these ceremonies, he beheld the Biscayan led forward in chains, (for he was heavily ironed,) to salute his rival. His casque was off; a bandage covered his eye; his face was very pale; and he strode forward with an uncertain gait, as if feeble from the loss of blood, or agitated by shame and despair. Nevertheless, he spoke with a firm and manly voice, when he found himself confronted with his vanquisher.

"Thou mayest congratulate thyself, Cortes," said the fallen chief. "Thy star has the ascendant, thy fate is superior; and so much do I admire my own misfortune, that I could compliment thee upon it, did I not know it was wrought less by the valour of my enemies, than the perfidy of my friends."

"Thou doest thyself, as well as all others, a great wrong to say so, brother Narvaez," said the victor.

gravely ; "and it would better become thee magnanimously to confess thou art beaten by thine own fault, rather than to follow the example of little-minded men, and lay the blame upon others."

"I confess that I *am* beaten," said the captive ;—"and that the shame of my defeat will last longer than my grave. But I aver to God, and I maintain in thy teeth, though I am but a captive in thy hands, that this victory is altogether so miraculous, it could not have happened unless by the corruption of my people."

"To heaven and my good soldiers, it is all owing," said Cortes, composedly : "and so little miraculous, my brother, do I myself esteem it, after having twice or thrice beaten thirty thousand Tlascalans, at a time, all valiant men, that I vow to thee on my conscience, I cannot do other than consider this triumph as altogether the least of my achievements in Mexico."

"It must be so, since you say it," responded Narvaez, his breast heaving under the sarcasm, with a bitter and suffocating pang ; "yet it matters not. Let the glory be ever so little, the shame is not the less notorious ; and though thou scornest thy reward of fame, I will not fly from mine own recompense of contempt.—What more is expected of me ? Dios mio ! I cannot, like the rest, kiss thy hand, and take upon me the oaths of service. I am thy prisoner !"

"Had I been thine," said Cortes, gravely, "thou wouldst have fulfilled thy word, and hanged me, wouldst thou not ?"

"What matters it ?" replied the unfortunate man, with a firm voice. "Doubtless, if the passion that beset me at the time of the proclamation, had lasted after a victory, I should have been as good as my word : for which reason I will anticipate thy excuses, and assure thee out of mine own mouth, thou wilt but retaliate fairly, to dismiss me to the same fate."

"Thou canst not understand the moderation thou hast not practised," said Cortes rising, and speaking *with dignity*. "The foolish rage that provoked thee

to set a price upon my head, I remember not; the madness that proclaimed these true and most loyal men for rebels and traitors, must be passed by, as other hallucinations: but as, in doing this, thou hast greatly injured and jeoparded the interests of thy master the king, thou art worthy to suffer the death of a rebellious subject, for as such thou hast acted. Nevertheless, I will do thee a grace thou wouldst not accord to me; I will conceive, that, however traitorous have been thy actions, thou mayest have been faithful at heart,—mistaken, but not disloyal: in which thought, I give thee thy life, and will recommend thee into the hands of his majesty for judgment and mercy."

The conqueror waved his hand, and Narvaez was led away:—to terminate, in after years, a life of mischance by a death of misery, among those ruder tribes of the North who are but now vanishing from the borders of the Mississippi, and to add his melancholy tale to the gloomy histories of De Leon and De Soto.

"What will my noble and thrice-honoured friend, Don Amador de Leste?" cried Cortes, as he perceived the neophyte approaching him. "We should be good friends, señor; for I owe thee much, and we have been in peril together."

"Twice, I thank your excellency," said Amador, "you have done me the office of a true cavalier; for which I will not now trifle the time to thank you, inasmuch as my arm is henceforth unshackled, and I can write my gratitude better with it, than with my tongue. What I have now to require, is that your excellency will judge between me and this fellow, the master of a ship, in the matter of a Moor called Abdalla, otherwise Esclavo de la Cruz, and his son Jacinto; both of whom being Christian Moors, though captured in a Barbary vessel, this man doth claim to be his slaves; I, on the other hand, as their vowed protector and champion, upholding them to be free,

and in the condition of wards to his majesty the king."

"They are my slaves," said the master—but a frown from the general instantly closed his lips.

"It is well for the Moor," said Cortes, as, at his command, Abdalla approached, followed by Jacinto: "it is well for the Moor that he has so powerful a protector as Don Amador; for otherwise, having discovered it was his accursed hand shot off the falcon which destroyed me four brave men and maimed as many more, I had resolved to hang him like a hound, this very morning!"

"There is no better cannonier in all your excellency's train," said the master, who, however likely to be robbed of his property, could not check the impulse to praise it.

"I fired the cannon with the fear of death in my eyes, if I refused," said Abdalla, humbly; "and my lord should as well be wroth with the linstock as with myself."

"Say not a word, sirrah Moor," said Cortes; "for the favour of Don Amador having saved thy life, I have nothing further to do, but to judge thy claims to liberty; the which if thou establish, I will not scruple to employ thee in mine own service."

"The freedom of these twain," said Amador, "was recognised by his excellency, the admiral Cavallero; and I thought he had satisfied this ship-master."

"His excellency, the admiral, protested he would represent the matter to the governor Velasquez," said the surly captain; "and I was content to abide his decision. But my sailors, hearing there was more gold to be gathered among these hills than on the sea, deserted me; and not having the means to carry my ship to Cuba, I was fain to follow after them; hoping the excellent cavaliers would do me justice, and pay me for my captives."

"Sirrah," said the general, "wert thou with Narvaez, or with me, in this battle?"

"With neither," said the sailor. "I arrived at night-fall; and not being able to make my way to Narvaez, I slept off my fatigue in a hut below, till roused by the din of this siege; coming forth to behold which, I discovered my slaves, and straightway claimed them: and my sailors yonder will witness I won them in fair fight."

"The Moriscos are Christians, and therefore not thy property," said the commander; "and if they were, being taken out of the camp of an enemy, they should be reckoned spoils of war, and for that reason, my possessions, and not thine. Cease therefore thy demands; follow thy sailors, if thou wilt,—for on the lakes of Mexico, I shall have employment for thy best skill; and if, in time, I discover thee faithful, and this Moor as dexterous as thou representest, I will, without allowing thee any right to the same, give thee very good guerdon for his services."

The master, concealing his dissatisfaction, retired.

"I hoped," said Amador, "your excellency might be persuaded to send Abdalla and the boy to Spain."

"I am loath to say to Don Amador, that may not be," replied Cortes. "As a good Christian, Abdalla will doubtless rejoice to fight the infidel; and as for his boy, if there be no other cavalier willing to advance him to the honours of a page, I will myself receive him. I hear he is a good musician; and I want a playmate for my little Orteguilla, whom I left dancing boleros before the emperor Montezuma."

The fame of Jacinto as a lutist and singer, had already spread among the cavaliers; and his appearance was at the same time so prepossessing, that many of them stepped forward, and avowed themselves ready to receive him into service. Don Amador himself, now for the first time perusing his countenance at leisure, and moved as much by its beauty as by its air of grief and destitution, added himself to the number; and it seemed as if the claims of the various applicants might lead to heat and misunderstanding. The cap of Jacinto had fallen from his

head, and long ringlets, such as greatly stirred the envy of the younger cavaliers, fell over his fair brow and exceedingly beautiful countenance. His delicately chiseled lips, parted in alarm and anxiety, moved and played with an ever-varying expressiveness; while his large black eyes, in which brilliancy was mingled with a pensive gentleness, rolled from general to cavalier, from Amador to his father, with a wild solicitude.

The difficulty was terminated at last by Don Hernan.

"I vow by my conscience," said he, "I like the boy's face well; but I will not oppose my wishes to those of worthier gentlemen here present. In my opinion, no man hath so fair a claim to the boy as Don Amador de Leste, who first befriended him; and not doubting that, herein, the boy will agree with me, I propose the election of a master to be left to himself, or, what is the same thing, to his father, as a measure equally agreeable to all. Choose, therefore, Abdalla, between these cavaliers and thy benefactor; for it is not possible the stripling can remain with thyself."

Abdalla bent his troubled eyes around the assembly; and Amador, not doubting his choice, regarded him with a benignant encouragement. Long did the Almogavar survey him, now with eagerness, as if about to throw himself at his feet and beseech his protection, and now faltering with hesitation and doubt. Amador, mistaking the cause of his embarrassment, prepared to reassure him; when the eyes of the Moor, wandering away from himself, fell upon the figure of Don Gabriel standing hard by. The same hesitation that disturbed him before, again beset him; but it lasted not long. Amid the clouds of dejection and distraction that characterised the countenance of the knight of Rhodes, there shone a ray of benevolence as if the emanation of a fixed and constant principle; and Abdoul al Sidi, as he remarked *it*, forgot that Calavar was the slayer of his people.

"If my lord, my very noble lord," he said, bending to the earth, "will hear the prayer of his servant, and waste his charity on so great a wretch as Abdoul, there is no one of all this noble assembly to whose benevolent protection Abdoul would sooner confide his helpless and sinless child."

The cavaliers stared; yet Abdalla had not erred, when he reckoned on the humanity of Calavar.

The knight received the hand of Jacinto from his father, and regarding him with a paternal kindness, said,—

"For the sake of Him who did not scorn to protect little children, I will receive this boy into my arms, and protect him with my best strength, both from sorrow, and the sin that is the parent of sorrow."

"And I may see him sometimes?" said the Moor, lingering, though the general had motioned him away.

"Surely I keep him from harm, not from the love of his father."

"I commend thee to heaven, my child," said the Almogavar, embracing him. "Confide in thy master, remember thy father, and pray often.—Farewell!"

But the boy, with a cry that drew the commiseration of all present, threw himself into Abdalla's arms, and clasping him as if forever, wept on his bosom.

"Thy master waits thee, my child!" said Abdalla, disengaging his hands, and again leading him to Calavar. "Be wise and faithful, and remember, if not always in thy presence, I shall not often be far from thy side."

The stripling once more kissed the lips of the Morisco, and then checking his lamentations, as his father left him, wrapped his cloak round his head, as if to hide his tears, and stood by the knight in silence.

While this incident was passing, the attention of Cortes was attracted by two Indians differing much in equipment from the warriors of Chinantla, but still of a soldier-like bearing, who, in company with two or three of his chief cavaliers, hastily approached

him, and conferred with him through the medium of an interpreter. A cloud came over his countenance; he arose, and smote his hands together with fury.

"What, ho, cavaliers!" he cried; "we must think of other matters than crying babes and jingling pages. I thank God for this victory, for never came one more opportunely; and ye, true friends, who have, this moment, protested your allegiance, prepare now to make it more manifest. Sharpen your swords, saddle your horses; for to-day we must march to Tenochtitlan!"

A murmur of surprise ran through the multitude that thronged the pyramid; and Amador forgot both the boy, and the touch of indignation with which he had seen him transferred to another, though his kinsman, as he pressed towards the excited general.

"Know ye, friends and brothers!" continued Cortes, "that the devil has, at last, waked up in the infidel city; blood has been shed,—the blood of Spaniards as well as of pagan Mexicans,—and, at this moment, Alvarado is besieged in the palace by the whole hordes of the valley; and he swears to me, by these Tlascalcan messengers, that unless I render him speedy assistance, he must die of starvation, or perish under the sword of the barbarians. So God speed us to the Venice of the New World! the Babylon of the mountains! The gold shall not be snatched out of our hands, nor the fame blotted from our histories: we have this good day numbers enow to chase the imps from the islands, and to tumble the gods from their temples; and so will we, in the name of God and St. Peter, Amen!—God speed us to Tenochtitlan!"

The shout that answered this pious and valiant rhapsody from the pyramid and the square, gave note of the zeal with which his followers, both old and new, were prepared to second the resolution of their leader.

CHAPTER XXI.

A HISTORY of moral epidemics, drawn up by a philosophic pen, would add much to our knowledge of the mysteries of human character and human power, as well as of the probable contingencies of human destiny. In the prosecution of such a subject, besides tracing the development of those little causes which, in former days, have spread their effects from man to man, until whole communities have laboured under a disease resulting in revolutions of the most stupendous nature, we should, doubtless, perceive many of those points of susceptibility and chains of impulsion, which render men the creatures of change; and which, being definitely understood and wisely influenced, might at once put it in the power of philanthropists to govern the operations of reform in such manner as to avoid the evils of ill-considered innovation. Religion and liberty have both come to us as diseases; and the propagation of them throughout the lands of the heathen and the slave, is yet a measure of pain and peril, because we have not considered, or not yet learned, how to address ourselves to infirmity. What man will not say, that the enthusiasm which cumbered the sands of Syria with the blood of the Crusaders, might not, if properly directed, have brought light and happiness to all Europe? or that the fever, which has left the revolution of France a horror on the page of history, might not, under the guidance of a less speculative philosophy, have covered her valleys and filled her cities with security and peace? Enthusiasm comes and goes; and because we know not enough of its weak and governable qualities to direct it in the paths of justice and virtue, it is allowed yet to fill the world with wrong and misery; and, misapplied to the purposes of glory, avarice, and fanaticism, the engine which God has given us to advance our civilization, is still the preserver of barbarism.

In the facility with which the aboriginal empires of America were subverted by a handful of hot-headed Spaniards, mankind has been willing to find a proof of the savage imperfection of their institutions. In the case of Mexico, at least, this testimony is deceptive. If we remember that the tribes of Anahuac, like the other races of America, were struggling against obstacles which did not impede the advancement of other nations, we shall be surprised at the point of civilization they had reached. Heaven had denied all the useful domestic animals to America. The bison, which is perhaps not altogether untameable, roamed only over the prairies and the forest lands of the north, among tribes that were yet in the bottom class of humanity. The horse and the ass added not their strength to the labours of man; and the little llama, bearing the burden of its master over the icy Cordilleras of the south, was but a poor substitute for the camel of the desert, to which it has been compared. Accident, or the knowledge of a thousand years, can alone teach men the use of that metal which will bring him civilization, when gold will not buy it; but the discovery even of the properties of iron will soon follow the invention of an alphabet, however rude or hieroglyphic. The Mexicans could already record and perpetuate their discoveries. Without the aid of iron and domestic animals, they were advancing in refinement. Civilization had dawned, and was shedding a light, constantly augmenting, over their valleys; and, apart from these deficiencies, saving only, perhaps, additionally, in the article of religion, which was not yet purged of its abominations, (and which, *perhaps*, flung more annual victims on the altars than did, in after days, even the superstition of their conquerors, in Spain,) the Mexican empire was not far behind some of the monarchies of Europe in that method, purpose, and stability of institutions, both political and domestic, which are esteemed the evidences of civilization.

A moral epidemic nerved the arm of the invaders;

another paralyzed the strength of the invaded. Superstition covered the Spaniard with armour stronger than his iron mail, and left the Mexican naked and defenceless; and, in addition, the disease of disaffection, creeping from the extremities to the centre of the empire, added its weight to the lethargy of religious fear. When Hernan Cortes set out on his march, the second time, against Tenochtitlan, believing that God had chosen him to be a scourge to the misbeliever, he knew well that thousands and tens of thousands of malecontents were burning to join his standard. Mexico was the Rome of the New World,—a compound of hostile elements, an union of tribes and states subdued and conjoined by the ambition of a single city, but not yet so closely cemented as to defy the shocks of a Gothic irruption. What might have been the condition of the empire of Montezuma, if the divine ray which conducted the Genoese pilot over the Atlantic, had been reserved for an adventurer of the present day, it is impossible to determine; but, it is quite clear, its condition was such at the time of the invasion, that, had not the indecision of its monarch, founded on such a conjuncture of coincidences as might have confounded a more enlightened prince, entirely repressed its powers of resistance, no armies, raised by the Spanish colonists, or even by their European master, could have penetrated beyond the shores; and the destiny of Cortes would have been written in letters as few and as obscure as those which have recorded the fate of Valdivia among the less refined, but better united Araucanians of Chili.

The heart of the leader was bold, the spirits of his confederates full of resolution and hope; and notwithstanding the evil intelligence that their victims were wakening to a knowledge of their strength, and confirming their audacity in the blood they had already shed, the united followers of Narvaez and Hernan Cortes began their march over the mountains with alacrity and joy.

The novelties and wonders that were each day dis-

closed, were remarked by no one with more satisfaction than by Don Amador de Leste. He rejoiced when, ascending among the mountains, the fens and sandhills of the coast were exchanged for picturesque lakes and romantic crags; when the oak woods and pine forests began to stretch their verdant carpets over the hill-sides; when, standing among the colossal ruins of some shivered peak, he cast his eye over glen and valley, glittering with verdure and fertility, far away to the majestic ridges over whose hazy sides tumbled the foamy fall, or crept the lazy cloud, while among their gorges glistened the distant cones of snow. Now he admired the ferns, lifting their arborescent heads, like palms, among other strange trees; now, as he exchanged the luxuriant slopes for those volcanic deserts which strew the base of Perote with lava and cinders, he beheld the broad nopal, and the gigantic maguey, rearing their massive leaves over the fissures, while a scorched forest withered and rotted above. Sometimes, while pursuing his weary way over these mountain *paramos*, or deserts, he advanced bewildered, as what seemed a fair and spacious lake withdrew its vapoury waters from before him, and revealed a parched and barren expanse of sand. The journey was an alternation of mountain and valley, forest and plain, with sometimes a pleasant little Indian village, and, twice or thrice, a town of no mean magnitude and splendour, rising in pleasant nooks among the horrors of the waste.

Over this rugged region it was not possible to drag the ordnance and heavy stores, with which Cortes was now abundantly provided, without much labour and delay; and it was not until about the time of the summer solstice, more than a month after the fall of Zempoala, that, at the close of a pleasant day, the new invaders laid their eyes, for the first time, on Tlascala,—the capital of that warlike republic, which, for the singular object, as certain historians have conjectured, of preserving an enemy to exercise their

armies, as well as to furnish victims for their gods, the Mexican monarchs permitted to subsist in the heart of their empire.

The slowness of their march was productive of many advantages to those particular individuals, whose adventures it is the object of this history to record. It gave to Don Amador an opportunity to make the acquaintance of many of his new companions, among whom were some not unworthy his friendship. The services of the señor Duero were remembered not without gratitude; and although he reflected, at times, with some unreasonable disgust, that these denoted as much treachery to a friend as humanity to a stranger, the attentions of that cavalier were so sedulously continued, that he could not well refuse him his regard. The taciturn but ever-resolute Sandoval,—the lofty and savage, but not the less courteous De Leon,—the fiery De Olid,—the daring De Ordaz, who, thirsting to accomplish exploits not dreamed of by his confederates, had clambered among the snowy pinnacles and burning caverns of the great Volcan, and had thereby won the right, confirmed to him afterwards by the Spanish king, to carry a fire-mountain for his arms;—these, as well as divers others of no mean renown, so recommended themselves to the esteem of the neophyte, that he dismissed much of his preconceived contempt, and began to consider himself among honourable and estimable cavaliers. But to none of them did his spirit turn with so much confidence and affection as to Don Francisco de Morla, a young hidalgo of his own native town, greatly beloved throughout the army, as a man of honour and tried courage. In this cavalier, a modest carriage was united to great gayety of disposition, and a warm heart, governed by gentleness of temper. A milder enthusiasm than that which beset his comrades, softened him to the barbarians, in whose land he was more desirous to consider himself a guest than an enemy; and without lacking any sincerity of devotion to his own faith, he seemed

to regard the ferocious superstitions of the natives with less abhorrence than pity. He had followed at the side of Cortes from Tobasco to Zempoala; and, being as observant as brave, was not only able to acquaint Don Amador with the marvellous events of the invasion,—its perils, sufferings, and triumphs,—but could also instruct him in many of the remarkable characteristics of the land and the people.

The effects of this delay on the knight of Rhodes were equally beneficial, though differently wrought. The paroxysms of lethargy, as well as the fits of distraction, which, as Don Amador learned from the faithful Marco, had been many and ungovernable, whenever the excitement of battle was over, began to vanish under the interest of the society, and the influence of the careful government of the neophyte; who, from long acquaintance with his kinsman's eccentricities, had acquired a power to soothe them. But if such was the influence of Don Amador, the power of the little Moorish page over his moody moments was still more remarkable. The sorrows of Jacinto vanished with the capriciousness of childhood; and perceiving that, in the long and toilsome march, he was never so far separated from his father that he might not look to see him at night-fall, he quickly recovered his spirits. Then, as if to express his gratitude to the good knight who protected him, he studied, with wonderful diligence and address, how best to please and divert him. With a thousand pretty stories, chosen with such discretion and prattled with such eloquence, as often surprised the neophyte;—with countless songs, which no one could sing with more sweetness, or accompany with more skill on the lute,—he would seduce the knight from his gloom, and cheat him out of his melancholy. No dagger shone so brightly as that polished by the hand of Jacinto; no plume of feathers waved with more grace than that set by the young Moor on the casque of Don Gabriel. If a tiger-flower glittered on the path, if a *chirimoya* put forth its fruit by the way-side, be-

fore the knight could turn his eyes upon them, they were in his hand; and Jacinto smiled with delight, as he received the thanks of his patron. The benevolence of Don Gabriel soon changed to affection; he almost smiled—not so much with joy as with love—when, sometimes, the boy sat at his feet at evening, and sang with fervour a hymn to the Virgin; he was troubled if, by chance, Jacinto strayed from his sight; and Don Amador sometimes found himself beset by a sort of jealousy, when he perceived, or thought he perceived, this stripling robbing him of the heart of his kinsman. But to do Don Amador justice, it needed not many suggestions of his honour or pride to rid him of such envious emotions. The zeal of the boy in the service of Calavar, as he confessed, deserved much of his own gratitude; to which should be added many acknowledgements of the satisfaction with which he himself listened to his instrument and voice. If the boy sang with alacrity at the wish of Calavar, he was not less ready to obey the command of the neophyte. Nevertheless, Don Amador fancied this obedience was rendered less from love than duty: he thought the stripling looked on him with fear, sometimes with dislike; and he was persuaded that (though on occasions of difficulty,—when a thunder-storm met them on a hill, or a torrent roared over the path,—Jacinto chose rather to fly to him for protection, than to remain by the side of the knight,) he was oftener disposed to shrink from his kindness. This troubled Don Amador, for he loved the boy well; and often he said to himself, “I have saved this urchin from a beating, and, as I may add, from the imminent danger of being speared like a frog;—I have given him gentle words, as also praises for his singing, which is indeed very excellent; I have helped him over divers rivers, and a thousand times offered him a seat on Fogoso’s crupper, which it was his own fault, or his own cowardice, he did not accept; in short, I have helped him out of countless troubles, and was, besides, the first to befriend him in these

lands,—without reckoning what protection I have given to his father, Sidi Abdalla;—and yet the lad loves me not. It is a pity he was not born of Christian parents;—ingratitude runs in Moorish blood!”

So thought Don Amador, a thousand times; but a thousand times, as his displeasure waxed hot at the unthankfulness of the lad, it was dissipated by some little circumstance or another. Once, when he was in a talkative mood, and desirous to have Jacinto at his side, he was so displeased at his evident wish to escape, as to vent his displeasure in a reprimand. The boy ran to his side, kissed his hand, and raised his eyes, suffused with tears, to the countenance of his preserver.—The cavalier never rebuked him again. On two or three occasions, also, greatly to his surprise, he caught the stripling weeping; which was the more wonderful, since he seemed not only reconciled, but greatly pleased with his state of easy servitude. On all such occasions, he excused himself with such persuasive simplicity, as not only to remove all suspicions of discontent, but greatly to increase the affection of the neophyte. He was a favourite as well with the men-at-arms, as with their masters; and Don Amador often reflected with wonder, how quickly he had wound himself into the hearts of all. “If I could persuade myself into a belief of magic,” he pondered, “I should think him a truer conjurer than Botello. What Botello prophesied concerning Narvaez, is very remarkable; yet, when a man is prognosticating all his life, it is hard if he do not sometimes blunder upon the truth. Truly he blundered wrong about Lorenzo’s arm, which is not yet well healed; and I vow to St. John, I thought, one time, it would have gangrened. But as to Jacinto, he has enchanted my knight’s heart. I have ever thought *he* abhorred the Moors, and surely he slew great numbers in the war of the Alpujarras. As for myself, I was born with a natural detestation of the Moorish race; and I never before knew but one *that I did not hate at first sight.*” Here he sighed

dolefully. "But this boy I love; yet loves he not me.—I have heard of philters and love-medicines; and surely, as many drugs attack the stomach, brain, and other parts, there is no reason some should not be found to affect the heart!"

But while the neophyte thus marvelled and reasoned, Jacinto stole still deeper into his favour; and at the end of a day's march, Don Amador was oftener found sitting at the door of some Indian cabin, or under the shade of its flower-garden, listening with Calavar to the lays of the young musician, than sharing the martial sports of his companions, or even superintending the warlike exercises of his ward, Fabuena.

CHAPTER XXII.

To those invaders who had not yet witnessed with their own eyes the peculiar wonders of the interior, the approach to Tlascala was full of surprise and interest. As the sun sank, the four hills on which lay the republican city, and the pyramids and towers that crowned them, sent their long shadows over the plain to the feet of the cavaliers; and in the gloom, they beheld a vast multitude,—the armies of the four tribes which composed the nation, under their several banners, glittering with feathers, and marching in regular divisions to the sound of wild music, as well as a host of women and children waving knots of flowers, and uttering cries of welcome,—advancing to do them honour. Don Amador forgot the valiant appearance of the warriors of Chinantla, while gazing on the superior splendour of the armed Tlascalans. These warlike people, in imitation of their Christian confederates, had learned to divide their confused throngs into squadrons and companies, ranked under separate leaders, and now approached in what seemed well-ordered *columns*. Bunches of red and white feathers

waved among their long locks, and ornamented their wickered shields; the short tunic of *nequen*, a coarse white cloth of the maguey, left their muscular and well-sculptured limbs free for action; and as they strode along, brandishing their swords of obsidian, (the *maquahuill*,—a heavy bludgeon, armed on either side with blades of volcanic glass,) or whirling in their slings those missiles of hardened copper armed with sharp horns, which were capable of piercing the toughest armour,—and ever and anon, mingling their fierce cries with the savage sound of drum and flute, they made a show not more remarkable than glorious. At the head of each division, under his peculiar standard, (the image of some bird of prey, or wild beast, very gorgeously decorated,) marched each chieftain, with the great plume of distinction, or *penacho*, as it was called, rising full two feet above his head, and nodding with a more than barbarous magnificence. Thus appareled and thus displayed, they advanced to the head of the Christian army, and dividing on either side, so as to surround the Spanish host with a guard of honour, each individual, from the naked slinger to the feather-crowned chief, did homage to the Christian general, by touching the earth with his hand, and then kissing the humbled member; while at the same moment, a number of priests with black robes and hair trailing almost to the ground, waved certain pots of incense before him, as if to a demigod; a mark of distinction which they afterwards extended to the cavaliers that surrounded him. The religious ire of Don Amador de Leste was inflamed, when it became his turn to receive this fragrant compliment; and looking down fiercely upon the innocent censer-bearer, and somewhat forgetting that Castilian was not the language of the realm, he cried;—

“What dost thou mean, thou pagan dog! to smoke me in this idolatrous manner, who am neither a god nor a saint?”

“Señor,” said De Morla, who sat at his side, “be

not offended at this mark of reverence, which the customs of the country cause to be rendered to every man of dignity; and which is a harmless compliment, and no idolatrous homage, as was first thought among us. Thou wilt presently see them smoke their own generals and senatorial lawgivers, the last of whom thou mayest see yonder approaching us in a group;—those old men with the feather fans in their hands.”

As De Morla predicted, the priests were no sooner done smoking their Christian visitors, than they turned to do similar reverence to their own dignitaries; and Don Amador's concern was soon changed to admiration to behold with what lofty state these noble savages received the tribute due to their rank.

“This fellow with the red plume, and the sword that seems heavy enough for a giant's battle-axe,” he cried,—“the knave over whom they hold a great white bird like an ostrich?—He must needs be a king! He bends to Cortes, like an emperor doing courtesy to some brother monarch.”

“That,” said De Morla, “is Xicotencal, of the tribe of the White-Bird, the most famous general of the Tlascalans, and, in fact, the captain-in-chief of all their armies. He is not less valiant than famous, and not less arrogant than valiant; and at this moment, beshrew me, I think he would rather be knocking his bludgeon over our heads, out of pure love of war, than kissing his fingers in friendship. This is the man who commanded the armies which fought us on our first approach; and truly I may say, he fought us so well, that had he not been commanded by the senators, who are the civil rulers of Tlascala, to make peace with us, there is much suspicion we should have seen heaven sooner than the vale of Mexico. For, señor, after having supplied us with food, as scorning to be assisted in his victory by famine, which was somewhat pressing with us, he fell upon us to win it in person; and I must confess, as will be recorded in history, he quite broke and

confounded, and would have utterly destroyed us, had it not been for a providential mutiny in his camp in the very midst of his triumph; whereby we had time to rally, and take advantage of his distresses. The same good fortune might have been his, another time, without so inconvenient an interruption. But it seems the senators of Tlascala only made war on us, to prove whether or not we were valiant men, and worthy to be received as their allies, according to our wish; which being now proved to their satisfaction, they ordered the war to be ended, and welcomed us as friends. There never were more valiant men than these soldiers of Tlascala."

"Of a surety," said Don Amador, "I begin to think the captain Gomez of the caravel was somewhat mistaken as to the courage of these barbarians."

"Thou seest the second chief,—he of the green penacho, with whom Cortes confers so very courteously! That is Talmeccahua, chief of the tribe Tizatlan, a very young warrior, but second in fame only to Xicotencal; and being more docile and friendly, he is much a favourite with our general and doubtless will be selected to accompany us to the great city. Of those reverend old senators I could also give you an account; but we who are soldiers, care not for lawgivers. It is enough to assure you, that they are the rulers of Tlascala; and that though these proud people, the commoners, call themselves free republicans, they are to all intent and purposes the servants of many masters; a sort of freedom somewhat more questionable than that of a nation governed by one king. Thou seest, they kiss their hands to us, as we enter their city. For my part, I think them rogues to love us, their true enemies, better than their domestic rivals, the people of Tenochtitlan. Wo betide them, who help us to conquer their foes, when their foes are conquered!"

As De Morla spoke, Don Amador found himself entering the city of Tlascala. Twilight had darkened over the hills, and in the obscurity, (for the moon

had not yet risen) he perceived long masses of houses, not very lofty, but strong, on the terraced roofs of which stood many human beings, chiefly women and children, who waved a multitude of torches, and, as they sung what De Morla told him were songs of welcome, threw flowers down upon their guests. Flambeaux were also carried before them in the streets; and with this sort of pomp, they were ushered to a great building with extensive courts, sufficient to lodge the whole army, which was assigned them for their quarters.

While the cannoniers were arranging the artillery, the officers of the guard choosing their watchmen, and preparations were made to hold a conference with the chiefs of the republic, the neophyte was invited by De Morla to accompany him to a pyramid on one of the four hills, whence, as he assured him, was a noble prospect of those huge mountains which separated them from the valley of Tenochtitlan. Don Amador looked about him for his kinsman. He had retired with the chaplain of the army, in some sudden disorder of spirit, for prayer or confession; and Don Amador sighed, as he bethought him that yearly, about the time of midsummer, the knight's disease seemed to reach its intensest point.

"If thou couldst but sing to him that holy song of the Virgin, written many years back by the priest of Hita,

Quiero seguir á ti, Flor de las flores !"—

said Don Amador to the Moorish page, (for it was Jacinto who gave him this information,) "I have no doubt thou wouldst do him more good than the reverend father Olmedo; for, though I know not why it should be so, he ever seems to me more troubled than relieved by confession."

'It was a song chanted the evening before that had thrown the knight's spirit into disorder; and Baltasar had commanded him never to sing again;' so said Jacinto.

"Baltasar is an ass! though very zealous for his

master," said the neophyte in a heat, "and thinks there is nothing comforts my kinsman's heart, save the clanging of swords and bucklers; whereas, I know very well, thy ditties are true medicine to him; and, with heaven's blessing, thou shalt sing him very many more."

"Let the boy follow with us," said De Morla: "I like his piping well; and methinks, if he have not forgotten that tender love-song about the Christian knight who adored a pagan Morisca, I can listen to it again with much good will, as I look towards the mountains of Montezuma."

"I am loath to have him away, for perhaps my good knight may call for him when the confession is over; and there is something raw in this night air, that may be prejudicial to the youth."

"*Yo seguiré á mi señor*—I will follow my master," said Jacinto, with simplicity. "My lord the knight bade me this night to remain by the side of my lord, lest some evil should happen to me among the infidels."

"Take up thine instrument then," said the neophyte, "for thou seemest to-night to remain by me in good will; and I am ever glad to have thy foolish company, when such is the case. If thou wilt carry a torch also, 'tis very well: 'twill be some half hour yet ere moonrise."

The two cavaliers, followed by the page bearing a torch, as well as his lute, strode through the streets, which were still thronged with their savage allies, as in a gala-day, singing and shouting; many of whom, from affection or curiosity, seemed disposed to add themselves to the little party. Nevertheless, such inquisitive individuals were easily repelled by De Morla pointing in the direction he was pursuing, and pronouncing a few words in their language, the effect of which, as Don Amador observed, was always to check their ardour, and cover their visages, when these could be seen, with sadness and awe.

"I tell them," said De Morla, in answer to the inquiries of the neophyte, "that we are going to the hill

to look upon the fire-mountain, Popocatepetl; and why they are so stricken with superstition at the name, I will explain to thee when we reach the temple."

The temple was soon reached. The city,—a congregation of cabins and rude stone dwellings, of vast size,—lying on the prolonged base of a great mountain, reared its principal sanctuaries on the spurs of this elevation, on the highest of which stood that consecrated to the god of the air. This was an earthen pyramid, huge and lofty, surmounted by towers such as Don Amador had seen at Zempoala. As the friends approached this, the deep silence that surrounded it was broken by the voices of men speaking vehemently in a strange tongue; and as they advanced, they beheld two or three figures glide behind the pyramid, as if to escape observation. This would not perhaps have attracted the notice of the neophyte, had not his companion exclaimed,—

"Sidi, the cannonier, again! plotting his knaveries with the two Moorish slaves of Cortes! There is some villany in the wind: I have twice or thrice seen Abdalla in close conference with these two varlets, and he is often seen talking with his other countrymen that we have in the army. I will represent this matter to the general; for there can no good come of such secret proceedings.—I have all along distrusted that infidel cannonier to have some mischief in him."

"Please my lord, my father is no infidel," said Jacinto, trembling, perhaps as much at his presumption in contradicting a noble hidalgo, as at the presumed danger of his parent,—“no infidel, but a Christian Moor; as the good padre Olmedo will witness to my lord."

"Young page," said De Morla, pleasantly, "I should not have said so grievous a thing of thy father, but that I forgot thou wert in hearing. I will grant thee Abdalla to be a good Christian, if the padre say so; but, if thou art as much of a wit as a singer, tell me, how is it thy father is found so often skulking about by night, in company with the Moorish slaves,

who are yet unbelievers, instead of resting with Christian soldiers?"

"Though the Moors be slaves and Mahometans," said the page, with much of the submissiveness of his father, though recovering from his trepidation, "they were born in the same land with my father, and are his countrymen. As for the Christian soldiers, they will not forget, that though a Christian, he was born of the poor Moriscos: and, my lord knows, it is hard to rest with those who hate us."

"I should give thee a ducat for thy argument," said De Morla, good-humouredly, "but that I know thou art so unsophisticated as to prefer sweet praise to gold; and I intend soon to bestow some of that upon thee. Thy oration has utterly persuaded me I have wronged Abdalla; in token of my penitence for which, I will relieve thee of the burthen of the torch, whilst thou art climbing up these steps, which are none of the smoothest nor shortest."

"Take thou my hand, Jacinto," said the novice, benevolently; "for, as my friend says, these steps are indeed very rugged; and I am willing to show thee, that though thou art of Moorish blood, I myself do by no means either hate or despise thee."

The page humbly and hesitatingly placed his hand in the grasp of Don Amador, and ascending at his side, soon stood on the summit of the pyramid.

Here, besides two towers of stone that reared their lofty bulk over head, the novice perceived in advance of them, two great urns of rude workmanship, each apparently carved out of a solid block of stone, and each glowing with the remains of a fire not yet extinguished,—though no priests stood by, to guard and replenish them.—They had forsaken their altars, to join in the festivities of the evening.

"Let us break these idolatrous censers!" said Don Amador, "for my blood boils to look upon them."

"Nay," said the moderate De Morla, "let us wait for heaven's own time, as is strenuously advised by *our wise* and holy chaplain, who must know better *than ourselves* how to attack the impieties of the land.

We have ever found these heathens more easily converted by gentle persuasions than by violent assaults on their prejudices; and father Olmedo has shown us how persecution strengthens instead of overturning an abused superstition. He has also proved to the satisfaction of most of us, that it is our bounden duty to subdue the arms of the pagans, and leave their faith to be conquered by the good priests who will follow in our path.—Turn, señor, from these pigmy vases to the great censers, which God has himself raised to his majesty!”

As De Morla spoke, he turned from the altars, and Don Amador, following with his eyes the direction in which he pointed, beheld a spectacle which instantly drove from his mind the thought of the idolatrous urns. Far away in the south-west, at the distance of eight or ten leagues, among a mass of hills that upheld their brows in gloomy obscurity, a colossal cone elevated its majestic bulk to heaven, while the snows which invested its resplendent sides, glittered in the fires that crowned its summit. A pillar of smoke, of awful hue and volume, rose to an enormous altitude above its head, and then parting and spreading on either side through the serene heaven, lay still and solemn, like a funeral canopy, over its radiant pedestal. From the crater, out of which issued this portentous column, arose also, time by time, great flames with a sort of lambent playfulness, in strange and obvious contrast with their measureless mass and power; while ever and anon globes of fire, rushing up through the pillar of vapour, as through a transparent cylinder, burst at the top, and spangled the grim canopy with stars. No shock creeping through the earth, no heavy roar stealing along the atmosphere, attested the vigour of this sublime furnace; but all in silence and solemn tranquillity, the spectacle went on,—now darkling, now waxing temporarily into an oppressive splendour, as if for the amusement of those shadowy phantoms who seemed to sit in watch upon the neighbouring peaks.

"This is indeed," said Don Amador, reverently, "if God should require an altar of fire, such a high place as might be meet for his worship than any shrine raised by the hands of man. God is very great and powerful! The sight of such a spectacle doth humble me in mine own thoughts: for what is man, though full of vanity and arrogance, in the sight of Him who builds the fire-mountains?"

"Padre Olmedo," said his companion, "will ask you, what is this fire-mountain, though to the eye so majestic, and to appearance so eternal, to the creeping thing whose spark of immortality will burn on, when the flames of yonder volcano are quenched forever?"

"It is very true," said the neophyte, "the mountains burn away, the sea wastes itself into air, but the soul that God has given us consumes not. The life of the body passes away like these flames; the vitality that is in the spirit, is a gift that heaven has, not extended to the stars!"

"My friend," said De Morla, willing to pass to more interesting discussions, "will now perceive for what reason it was that the Tlascalans were dismayed and sorrowful when I pronounced the name of Popocatepetl. The name signifies the Mountain of Smoke; for this great chimney, though ever pouring forth dark vapours, has not often been known to kindle into flames. The present eruption, beginning about the time of our descent upon the coast, has ever since continued; and was considered to have heralded our appearance. The Tlascalans, though as securely fettered under the sway of their senators, as are the people of Anahuac under their kings, are, as I told thee, very intolerant of such chiefs as carry the open names of masters. Nay, so bitterly do they detest all tyrants, that they have constructed a fable, which they now believe as a truth,—namely, that the souls of such persons are concocted and elaborated among the flames of yonder awful cráter; whence, *at the times* of eruptions, they are sent forth, in the

shape of meteors and fire-balls, to afflict and desolate the world. The globes that fall back into the cavity, they think, are despots recalled by their relenting gods; whereas, those that fall beyond the brim and roll down the sides of the mountain, are tyrants let loose upon them without restraint. This being their belief, it may seem strange to you, they have conceived so preposterous an affection for ourselves, who are much liker to prove their tyrants than any of the lords of Anahuac; but yet, so savage is their detestation of these native kings, that, though nightly terrified with the spectacle of so many fiery tyrants flying through the air, they seem quite to have lost sight of the danger of entrusting their liberties to our care."

"I hope," said Don Amador, "we have come to rid them of the bondage of idolatry, not to reduce them to a new slavery."

"We will see that by-and-by," said De Morla. "We broke the chains of superstition in the islands, but we followed them with more galling fetters; and what better fate awaits the good Montezuma, is more than I can tell."

"Dost thou call that savage emperor the good Montezuma?" demanded the novice.

"I cannot do otherwise," said De Morla, mildly, "A thousand times might he have swept us from the face of the earth; for his armies are numberless. A grain of sand from the hand of each of his warriors, would have covered us with a mountain. But age has come to him with a disgust of blood; and all his actions have proved him rather a humane host than a barbarous destroyer. I must confess, we have repaid his gentleness and beneficence both with perfidy and cruelty; yet, notwithstanding all this, and notwithstanding that he is sorely afflicted by our harshness, such is the goodness of his heart, that he will not permit his people to do us any injury, nor, by any violence, rescue him out of our hands."

"I have heard another story from Don Hernan."

said Amador: "and, truly, I thought these ferocious assaults upon the garrison left with the señor Alvarado in the city, were proof enough of his deceitful malice."

"I will not take upon me to contradict what is averred by Don Hernan," said De Morla. "But, señor, we have had other representations of these tumults, by envoys from Montezuma himself, which, if Cortes had not refused to hear them, would have entirely changed the nature of our belief. I have myself spoken with these ambassadors," continued the young cavalier earnestly, "some of whom were sent to us at Zempoala, and others have met us at divers places since, though without being hearkened to,—and having no inducements to remain in a rage, like Cortes himself, I was very easily persuaded, to my shame, that the fault lay all on the side of the garrison.—Señor, for the sake of lucre, we have done many unjust things! We were received with all hospitality by Montezuma, the great lord of Tenochtitlan; he gave us a palace to live in, supplied us with food and raiment, and enriched us with many costly presents. We repaid all this kindness, by seizing him, in a moment of confidence, and conveying him to our dwelling, where we have kept him ever since a prisoner, forcing him, by the fear of death, to submit to many indignities unworthy his high rank and benevolent character; and once even forcing him to sit in chains and witness the cruel execution of some of his own officers for a certain crime in which he could have had no part. He forgave us this, as well as other insults, and, while we were absent against Zempoala, preserved his promise sacred, to remain in ward of Alvarado until our return. Now, señor, you shall hear the truth of the assault, of which so much is said by Cortes, as fully proving the iniquitous duplicity of the captive emperor. While we were gone, there occurred the anniversary of the great festival of Mexitli, the war-god, in which it is customary for *all the nobles*, arrayed in their richest attire, to dance

on the terrace of the great pyramid, before the emperor. Alvarado, dreading lest such an assemblage of chiefs, heated, as we well knew them to be, on account of the imprisonment of their king, might encourage them to rescue him from his thrall, refused to let the *Mitotes*, (for so they call this ceremony,) be danced on the temple; and, at his invitation, the Tlatoani assembled in the court-yard of the palace which Montezuma gave us for our quarters; and here the rite began. Now, señor," continued De Morla, speaking indignantly, "you will blush to hear, that our Christian garrison were so inflamed with cupidity at the sight of the rich and precious jewels, with which their guests were decorated, that they resolved to possess them, though at the cost of blood-guiltiness; and falling upon these poor unsuspecting and unarmed revellers, when wearied with the dance, and calling out '*Treason!*' as if to justify themselves, though there was no treason, except that in their own hearts, they butchered all that could not leap the high walls, and rifled the corpses, even in the sight of the emperor. This, as you may well believe, excited the people to fury, and drove them to vengeance. They assaulted the palace, killed many of the perfidious garrison, and would have destroyed all, but that Montezuma, whom they call the traitor and murderer, moved by the intreaties and excuses of Alvarado, commanded them to retire; and such are their love and subjection to this monarch, that they instantly obeyed him, and have remained in peace ever since, waiting the return and the judgment of Don Hernan.—And Don Hernan will doubtless command us to give them justice, by slaying as many as shall dare to demand it."

"By heaven!" said Don Amador, "if this be the truth, there are more barbarians than those who worship pagan idols; and I vow to God, if I find thy narrative well confirmed, I will draw no sword, not even at the bidding of my knight Calavar, on the people of Tenochtitlan. Were I even sworn,

like a vowed knight of Rhodes, to keep no peace with the infidel, I could not fight in an unjust cause."

"I am glad to hear you say so," said De Morla, frankly; "for I have often, ever since I have been assured of the friendly and docile character of the Mexicans, been persuaded it would be wiser, as well as juster, to teach them than to destroy. Your favour will find the nobles very civilized; and surely their daughters, if converted to the true faith, would make more honourable wives for Spanish hidalgos than the Moorish ladies of our own land."

A sigh came from the lips of Jacinto, as he heard this narrative, to which he had listened with boyish interest, terminated with a slur so degrading to his people. But his mortification was appeased by Don Amador, exclaiming with great emphasis,—

"That these Mexican princesses may make very good wives, when true Christians, I can well believe; but I have my doubts whether they have any such superiority over the Moorish ladies of Granada, who possess the religion of Christ. I have, once or twice, known very noble Moriscas, honoured among the wives of Granada as much as those who boasted the pure blood of Castile; and for myself, without pretending to say I shall ever condescend to such a marriage, I may aver, that I have seen at least one fair maiden, and she of no very royal descent, whom,—that is, if I had loved her,—I should not have scorned to wed. But these things go by fate: a Christian Moor is perhaps as much regarded by heaven as a Christian Spaniard; and surely there are some of them very lovely to look on, and with most angelical eyes!"

The gentle cavalier smiled in his own conceits, as he listened to the argument of his friend; but, without answering it, he said,—

"While we have the authority of the Cid Ramon of Leon before our eyes, I am much disposed to agree with Don Amador; for the Cid adored an infidel, and why should not we love proselytes? Come,

now, my pretty page: of all thy ballads, I like best that which treats of the loves of Cid Ramon; and if thou hast not forgotten it, I shall rejoice to hear thee chant it once more, while we sit under the tower and gaze on the fire-mountain, that looks down on Mexico."

The boy agreed with unusual alacrity, and sitting down at the feet of the cavaliers, on the flags that surrounded the sanctuary, with the torch stuck in the earth near him, he tuned his instrument with a willing hand.

CHAPTER XXIII.

LIGHTED not more by the torch at his feet than by the flames that crested the distant mountain, the Moorish boy struck the lute with a skilful touch, whispered, rather than wailed, the little burthen that kept alive the memory of the Alhambra, and then sang the following Romance;—a ballad that evidently relates to the fate of Mohammed Almosstadir, king of Seville, dethroned by the famous Yussef ben Taksin, Emir of Morocco. In the wars of the Moorish kings of Spain with Alfonso VI. of Leon, about the year 1090, the Christian monarch prevailing, his infidel enemies invited Yussef to their assistance. The emir obeyed the call; but having fought one or two battles with Alfonso, contented himself with turning his arms on his confederates, and dethroning them,—Mohammed Almosstadir among the number. It is recorded, that his chivalrous enemy, the king Alfonso, moved by the distresses of Mohammed, sent an army of twenty thousand men to assist him against Yussef; but in the obscurity of the historic legends of that day, nothing can be discovered in relation to the devout condition of "kissing the cross," nor, indeed, of the name or fate of the leader of the Spanish army. We should know nothing of the good Cid, but for the

ballad, which was doubtless of very antique or though the simple burthen, *Me acuerdo de ti, Gran* commemorative of the fall of the Moorish city, have been added four hundred years after; perhaps the singer from whom Jacinto had learned it.

ROMANCE OF CID RAMON.

I remember thee, Granada !
 Cid Ramon spurr'd his good steed fast,
 His thousand score were near ;
 And from Sevilla's walls aghast,
 The watchmen fled with fear :
 For Afric's Emir lay around,
 The town was leaguer'd sore,
 And king Mohammed wept with shame
 To be a king no more.

I remember thee, Granada !
 The Emir's powers were round and nigh,
 Like locusts on the sward ;
 And when Cid Ramon spurr'd his steed,
 They struck him fast and hard.
 "But," quoth the Cid, "a knight am I,
 With crucifix and spear ;
 And for Mohammed ride I on,
 And for his daughter dear."—

I remember thee, Granada !
 "Cheer up, dark king, and wail no more,
 Let tears no longer flow ;
 Of Christian men a thousand score
 Have I to smite thy foe.
 The king Alfonso greets thee well :
 Kiss thou the cross, and pray ;
 And ere thou say'st the Ave o'er,
 The Emir I will slay."

I remember thee, Granada !
 "Or let the African be slain,
 Or let the Emir slay,
 I will not kiss the cross of Christ,
 Nor to his Mother pray.

A camel-driver will I live,
 With Yussef for my lord,
 Or ere I kiss the Christian's cross,
 To win the Christian's sword."

I remember thee, Granada!

"Mohammed, now thou griev'st me much—
 Alfonso is my king:
 But let Suleya kiss the cross,
 And let her wear the ring.
 The crucifix the bride shall bear,
 Her lord shall couch the spear;
 And still I'll smite thy foe for thee,
 And for thy daughter dear."

I remember thee, Granada!

Then up Suleya rose, and spoke,—
 "I love Cid Ramon well;
 But not to win his heart or sword,
 Will I my faith compel.
 With Yussef, cruel though he be,
 A bond-maid will I rove,
 Or ere I kiss the Christian's cross,
 To win the Christian's love."

I remember thee, Granada!

"Suleya! now thou griev'st me much—
 A thousand score have I;
 But, saving for a Christian's life,
 They dare not strike or die.
 Alfonso is my king, and thus
 Commands my king to me:
 But, for that Christian, *all* shall strike,
 If my true love she be."

I remember thee, Granada!

"Ill loves the love, who, ere he loves,
 Demands a sacrifice:
 Who serves myself, must serve my sire,
 And serve without a price.
 Let Yussef come with sword and spear,
 To fetter and to rend;
 I choose me yet a Moorish foe
 Before a Christian friend!"—

I remember thee, Granada!

"Ill loves the love, who pins his love
 Upon a point of creed;
 And balances in selfish doubt,
 At such a time of need.
 His heart is loosed, his hands untied,
 And he shall yet be free
 To wear the cross, and break the ring,
 Who will not die for me!"
 I remember thee, Granada!

The Emir's cry went up to heaven:
 Cid Ramon rode away—
 "Ye may not fight, my thousand score,
 For Christian friend to-day.
 But tell the king, I bide his hest,
 Albeit my heart be sore;
 Of all his troops, I give but *one*
 To perish for the Moor."
 I remember thee, Granada!

The Emir's cry went up to heaven;
 His howling hosts came on;
 Down fell Sevilla's tottering walls,—
 The thousand score were gone.
 And at the palace-gate, in blood,
 The Arab Emir raves;
 He sat upon Mohammed's throne,
 And look'd upon his slaves.
 I remember thee, Granada!

"The lives of all that faithful be,
 This good day, will I spare;
 But wo betide or kings or boors,
 That currish Christians are!"—
 Up rode Cid Ramon bleeding fast;
 The princess wept to see;—
 "No cross was kiss'd, no prayer was said,
 But still I die for thee!"
 I remember thee, Granada!

The Moorish maid she kiss'd the cross,
 She knelt upon her knee;—
 "I kiss the cross, I say the prayer,
 Because thou diest for me.

To buy thy thousand score of swords,
 I would not give my faith;
 But now I take the good cross up,
 To follow thee in death."

I remember thee, Granada!

"Holy Maria! Come to us,
 And take us to the blest;
 In the true blood of love and faith,
 Receive us to thy rest!"—

The Emir struck in bitter wrath,
 Sharp fell the Arab blade;
 And Mary took the Cid to heaven,
 And bless'd the Christian maid.

I remember thee, Granada!

"I like that ballad well," said De Morla, with a
 sigh, when the singer had finished, "and, to
 thought, no handsome maiden, though such al-
 ways makes the best ballad-singer, could have trolled
 with a more tender and loving accent than Jacinto.
 'The Moorish maid,' he continued, humming the
 words in a sentimental manner,—

The Moorish maid she kiss'd the cross,
 She knelt upon her knee.—

"No my mind, it would read better, if we could say,
 'The Mexican maid.'—

The Mexican maid she kiss'd the cross—

pho upon it! that spoils the metre.—Is it not thy
 opinion, señor, the princess Suleya would have shown
 the true love as well as wisdom, to have kissed the
 sword *before* the Cid came to his death-gasp?"

"By my faith, I cannot doubt it," said Don Ama-

—yet, considering that she avowed herself a
 noble lady, when the sword of that accursed Emir was
 ended over her head, and so provoked and en-
 dured the death of a martyr for Don Ramon's sake,
 must be acknowledged she acted as became a lov-
 ing and truly devout lady. But what I chiefly esteem

in this ditty, is the magnanimous art with which the Cid Ramon both preserved his faith to his king, and devoted himself to death for his mistress,—a reconciliation of duties which some might have considered impracticable, or, at least, highly objectionable.”

“Amigo querido mio,” cried De Morla, grasping the neophyte’s hand, and speaking with a voice half comical, half serious, “if thou livest a hundred years longer than myself, thou wilt hear some such mournful madrigal as this sung in memory of my foolish self; only that, in place of a Moorish Infanta, thou wilt hear the name of a Mexican princess; and Minnapotzin will doubtless be immortalized along with De Morla.”

“Minnapotzin!” exclaimed Don Amador, with a stare rendered visible enough by the distant flashings of the volcano. “I swear to thee, my brother, I understand not a word thou art saying!”

“To make the matter clear to thee then,” said De Morla, with forced gayety, “conceive me for a moment to be the Cid of whom we have been singing; and imagine my Suleya to be wandering by the lake side in the figure of a certain Minnapotzin, received to our holy faith under the name of Doña Benita,—a princess among these poor barbarians.”

“Dost thou indeed love one of these strange maidens, then?—and is she baptized in our holy faith?” demanded Don Amador, with much interest. “If she be worthy of thee, Francisco, I pray heaven to make thee happy with her.”

“Now, may I die!” cried De Morla, grasping Don Amador’s hand warmly, “if I did not fear thou wouldst either censure or laugh at me,—or perhaps turn thy ridicule upon Benita,—a wrong I never could have forgiven thee. For I protest to thee, there is no such gentle and divine being in all the world beside. I make thee my confidant, hermano mio, because I shall have much need of thy friendship and counsel; for though I come not, like Cid Ramon, with ‘a thousand score’ to rescue her pagan father,

sure am I, I cannot love the princess, and yet be blind to the miseries of the king."

"Assuredly," said Don Amador, "I will aid thee, and, for thy sake, both the fair princess and her unconverted sire, wherever, in so doing, I may not oppose my allegiance and religion."

"I will not claim any sacrifice," said De Morla, "unless so much as will rob thee of thy prejudices against this deluded people. In fact, I desire thee more as a confidant, than as an abettor; for there is nothing to oppose my happiness, saving the present uncertainty of the relations betwixt ourselves and the Mexicans. Minnapotzin is a Christian;—I dare be sworn, the Cid was not better beloved than myself;—and Cortes hath himself promised to ask the consent of our Christian king to the marriage, as soon as Montezuma has properly confirmed his vassalage. No, there is nothing to oppose me," continued De Morla, with a sudden sadness, "saving only this uncertainty I have spoken of,—and the darkness that hangs over my own destiny."

"I vow to thee, I am as much in the dark as before," said Don Amador.

"In good faith, my friend," said the young cavalier, with a faint smile, "it is promised me, I shall die very much like Don Ramon. Did I never tell thee what Botello hath prophesied?"

"Not a jot," said the neophyte. "But I trust thou puttest no faith in that worthy madman?"

"How can I help it?" said De Morla, seriously. "He has foretold nothing that has not been accomplished, from the quarrel of Cortes with the Adelantado Velasquez, even to the fall of Zempoala."

"I have reflected on this prediction with regard to Zempoala, as well as all others whereof I have heard," said the neophyte, with a sagacious nod, "and I have settled in mine own mind that there is nothing in them beyond the operation of a certain cunning, mingled with a boldness which will hazard any thing in prognostic. Much credit is given to Botello for

having, as I am informed, predicted, even before the embarkation of Cortes, the rupture between him and his governor that afterwards ensued. Now, any man, acquainted with the unreasonable rashness and hot jealousy of the governor, might have foretold a quarrel; and I see not how it could have been otherwise. So also, as I may say, I did myself, in a manner, foretell the disaster of Narvaez, as soon as I perceived his foolish negligence, in choosing rather to divert his soldiers with legerdemain dances than to set them about his city as sentinels. The victory comes not to the indiscreet general."

"All this might have been conjectured, but not with so many surprising particulars," said the cavalier. "How could Botello have predicted, that, though Narvaez should sally out against us, no blow should be struck by daylight?"

"Marry, I know not; unless upon a conviction that Cortes was too wise to meet his enemy on the plain; and from a personal assurance, that the rocks wherein the general had pitched his camp, were utterly unassailable."

"How could he have guessed that flames should drive the Biscayan from the tower?"

"Did he guess that, indeed?" said the neophyte, staring. "He could not have known that; for the brand was thrown by mine own rogue Lazaro, who, I know, was not his confederate."

"How could he have averred that Narvaez should lose his eye, and come blindfold to his conqueror?"

"Is it very certain Botello foretold *that*?" demanded Don Amador, his incredulity shaking.

"The señor Duero was present, as well as several other honourable cavaliers, and all confirm the story," said De Morla. "Nay, I could give thee a thousand instances of the marvellous truths he has spoken; and so well is Cortes convinced of his singular faculty, that he will do no deed of importance, without first consulting the magician."

"When my head is very cool," said Amador, mus-

ingly, "I find no difficulty to persuade myself that the existence of the faculty of soothsaying is incredible, because subversive of many of the wise provisions of nature; yet I will not take upon me to contradict what I do not know. And surely also, I may confess, I have heard of certain wonderful predictions made by astrologers, which are very difficult to be explained, unless by admission of their powers."

"What Botello has said to me," said De Morla, with a hurried voice, "has been in part fulfilled, though spoken in obscure figures. He told me, long since, that I should be reduced to bondage, 'at such time as I should behold a Christian cross hanging under a pagan crown.' This I esteemed a matter for mirth; 'for how,' said I, 'shall I find a pagan wearing a crucifix? and how shall I submit to be a captive among strange and cruel idolaters, when I have the power to die fighting?' But I have seen the cross on the bosom of one who wears the gold coronet of a king's daughter; and now I know that my heart is in slavery!"

Don Amador pondered over this annunciation; but while he deliberated, his friend continued,—

"When Botello told me this, he added other things,—not many but dark,—to wit, as I understood it, 'that I should perish miserably with my enslaver,' and, what is still more remarkable, with an infidel priest to say the mass over my body! Señor, these things are uncomfortable to think on; but I vow to heaven, if I am to die in the arms of Minnapotzin, I shall perish full as happily as did Cid Ramon in the embraces of Suleya!"

De Morla concluded his singular story with a degree of excitement and wildness that greatly confounded Don Amador; and before the neophyte could summon up arguments enough to reply, a voice from the bottom of the pyramid was heard pronouncing certain words, in a tongue entirely unknown to him, but among which he thought he recognised the name of Minnapotzin. He was not mistaken. De Morla started, saying, hastily,—

"I am called, señor. This is the voice of one of the envoys of Montezuma, with whom I have certain things to say concerning Doña Benita. I will return to thee in an instant." And so saying, he descended the stairs of the mound, and was straightway out of sight.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE moon had now risen, and was mingling her lustre with the blaze of the volcano. The shouts of revelry came less frequently from the city, and, one by one, the torches vanished from the house-tops and the streets. A pleasant quiet surrounded the deserted temple; a few embers, only, glowed in the sacred urns; but the combined light of the luminary and the mountain covered the terrace with radiance, and fully revealed the few objects which gave it the interest of life. In this light, as Don Amador turned to his youthful companion, he beheld the eyes of the page suffused with tears.

"How is it, Jacinto?—What ails thee?" he cried. "I vow to heaven, I am as much concerned at thy silly griefs, as though thou wert mine own little brother Rosario, who is now saying his prayers at Cuenza. Art thou weary? I will immediately conduct thee to our quarters. Is there any thing that troubles thee? Thou shouldst make me thy confidant; for surely I love thee well."

"Señor mio! I am not weary, and I am not grieved," said the stripling, with simplicity, as the good-natured cavalier took him by the hand, to give him comfort. "I wept for pity of the good Don Francisco and the poor Minnapotzin; for surely it is a pity if they must die!"

"Thou art a silly youth to lament for evils that have not yet happened," said Amador.

"But besides, señor," said the page, "when Don

Francisco made me sad, I looked at the moon, and I thought how it was rising on my country!"

"It is now in the very noon of night, both in thy land and mine," said the neophyte, touched by the simple expression, and leading the boy where the planet could be seen without obstruction;—"it is now midnight over Fez, as well as Castile; and, perhaps, some of our friends, in both lands, are regarding this luminary, at this moment, and thinking of us."

The page sighed deeply and painfully:

"I have no friends,—no, neither in Fez nor in Spain," he said; "and, save my father, my master, and my good lord, none here. There is none of my people left, but my father; and we are alone together!"

"Say not, alone," said Amador, with still more kindness,—for as Jacinto made this confession of his destitute condition, the tears fell fast and bitterly from his eyes. "Say not, alone; for, I repeat to thee, I have come, I know not by what fascination, to love thee as well as if thou wert my own little brother; and there shall no wrong come to thee, or thy father, while I live to be thy friend."

Jacinto kissed the hand of the cavalier, and said,—

"I did not cry for sorrow, but only for thinking of my country."

"Thou shouldst think no more of Fez; for its people are infidels, and thou a Christian."

"I thought of Granada,—for that is the land of Christians; and I longed to be among the mountains where my mother was born."

"Thou shalt live there yet, if God be merciful to us," said the cavalier: "for when there is peace in this barbarous clime, I will take thee thither for a playmate to Rosario. But now that we are here alone, let us sit by the tower, and while I grow melancholy, bethinking me of that same land of Granada, which I very much love, I will have thee sing me some other pretty ballad of the love of a Christian knight for a Moorish lady;—or I care not if thou repeat the romance of the Cid: I like it well—'Me

acuerdo de ti'—'me acuerdo de ti'—” And the neophyte seemed, while he murmured over the burthen, as if about to imitate the pensiveness of De Morla.

“If my lord choose,” said the page, “I would rather tell him a story of Granada, which is about a Christian cavalier, very noble and brave, and a Christian Morisca, that loved him.”

“A Christian Morisca!” said Amador; “and she loved the cavalier?—I will hear that story. And it happened in Granada too?”

“In one of the Moorish towns, but not in the royal city.—It was in the town Almeria.”

“In the town Almeria!” echoed Amador, eagerly. “Thou canst tell me nothing of Almeria that will not give me both pain and pleasure, for therein—But pho! a word doth fill the brain with memories!—Is it an ancient story?”

“Not very ancient, please my lord: it happened since the fall of Granada.”

“It is strange that I never heard it, then; for I dwelt full two months in this same town; and 'tis not yet forty years since the siege.”

“Perhaps it is not *true*,” said the stripling, innocently; “and, at the best, 'tis not remarkable enough to have many repeaters. 'Tis a very foolish story.”

“Nevertheless, I am impatient to hear it.”

“There lived in that town,” said Jacinto, “a Moorish orphan—”

“A girl?” demanded the neophyte.

“A Moorish maiden,—of so obscure a birth, that she knew not even the name that had been borne by her parents; but nevertheless, señor, her parents, as was afterwards found out, were of the noblest blood of Granada. She was protected and reared in the family of a benevolent lady, who, being descended of a Moorish parent, looked with pity on the poor orphan of the race of her mother. When this maiden was yet in her very early youth, there came a noble cavalier of Castile—”

“A Castilian!” demanded Don Amador, with ex-

traordinary vivacity,—“Art thou a conjurer?—What was his name?”

“I know not,” said Jacinto.

“Thou learnest thy stories, then, only by the half,” said the neophyte, with a degree of displeasure that amazed the youth. “And, doubtless, thou wert forgetful also to acquire the name of the Moorish orphan?”

“Señor,” said the page, discomposed at the heated manner of his patron, “the Moorish maiden was called Leila.”

“Leila!” cried the neophyte, starting to his feet, and seizing Jacinto by the arm—“Canst thou tell me aught of Leila?”

“Señor!” murmured Jacinto, in affright.

“Leila, the Morisca, in the house of the señora Doña Maria de Montefuerte!” exclaimed Don Amador, wildly. “Dost thou know of her fate? Did she sleep under the surges of the bay? Was she ravished away by those exile dogs of the mountains?—Now, by heaven, if thou canst tell me any thing of that Moorish maid, I will make thee richer than the richest Moor of Granada!”

At this moment, while Jacinto, speechless with terror, gazed on his patron, as doubting if his senses had not deserted him, a step rung on the earth of the terrace, and De Morla stood at his side.

The voice of his friend recalled the bewildered wits of the neophyte; he stared at Jacinto, and at De Morla; a deep hue of shame and confusion flushed over his brow; and perceiving that his violence had again thrown the page into tears, he kissed him benevolently on the forehead, and said, as tranquilly as he could,—

“A word will make fools of the wisest! I think I was dreaming, while thou wert at thy story. Be not affrighted, Jacinto: I meant not to scold thee—I was disturbed.—Next—next,” he added, with a grievous shudder, “I shall be as mad as my kinsman!”

“My brother! I am surprised to see thee in this emotion,” said De Morla.

"It is nothing," responded Amador, hastily and gloomily: "I fear there is a natural infirmity in the brains of all my family. I was moved, by an incident in the story of Jacinto, into the recollection of a certain sorrowful event, which, one day, perhaps, I will relate to thee.—But let us return to our quarters. The air comes down chilly from the mountains—it is time we were sleeping."—

The friends retired from the temple, leaving the torch sticking in the platform; for the moon was now so high as to afford a better illumination. They parted at the quarters; but Don Amador, after satisfying himself that the knight of Rhodes was sleeping on his pallet, drew Jacinto aside to question him further of the orphan of Almeria. His solicitation was, however, doomed to a disappointment; Jacinto was evidently impressed with the fear, that Don Amador was not without some of the weakness of Calavar; and adroitly, though with great embarrassment, avoided exciting him further.

"It is a foolish story, and I am sorry it displeases my lord," said he, when commanded to continue his narrative.

"It displeased me not—I knew a Moorish maid of that name in Almeria, who was also protected by a Christian lady; and, what was most remarkable, that Christian lady was of Moorish descent, like her whom thou wert speaking of; and, like the Leila of the story, the Leila of my own memory vanished away from the town before——"

"Señor," cried Jacinto, "I did not say she vanished away from Almeria: *that* did not belong to the story."

"Ay, indeed! is it so? Heaven guard my wife from what made me think it?—And thy Leila lived in Almeria very recently?"

"Perhaps ten or fifteen years ago."—

"Pho!—Into what folly may not an ungoverned fancy lead us?—Ten or fifteen years ago!—And thou never heardest of the Leila that dwelt in that town within a twelve-month?"

"*I, señor?*" cried Jacinto, with surprise.

"True—how is it possible thou couldst?—Thou hast, this night, stirred me as by magic. I know not by what sorcery thou couldst hit upon that name!"

"It was the name of the lady," said Jacinto, innocently.

"Ay, to be sure!—There is one Mary in heaven, and a thousand on earth—why should there not be many Leilas?—Did I speak harshly to thee, Jacinto? Thou shouldst not kiss my hand, if I did; for no impatience or grief could excuse wrath to one so gentle and unoffending. Good night—get thee to thy bed, and forget not to say thy prayers."

So saying, and in such disorder of spirits as the page had never before witnessed in him, Don Amador retired.

Jacinto was left standing in a narrow passage, or corridor, on which opened a long row of chambers with curtained doors, wherein slept the soldiers, crowded thickly together. In the gallery, also, at a distance, lay several dusky lumps, which, by the gleaming of armour about them, were seen to be the bodies of soldiers stretched fast asleep. As the boy turned to retire in the direction of the open portal, it was darkened by the figure of a man, entering with a cautious and most stealthy step. He approached, and by his voice, (for there was not light enough yielded by the few flambeaux stuck against the wall, to distinguish features,) Jacinto recognised his father.

"I sought thee, my child!" he whispered, "and saw thee returning with the hidalgos.—The watchmen sleep as well as the cannoniers.—It is as I told thee—art thou ready?"

"Dear father!"—stammered the page.

"Speak not above thy breath!—The curs, that are hungering after the blood of the betrayed Mexicans, would not scorn to blunt their appetites on the flesh of the Moor. Have thyself in readiness at a mo-

ment's warning: Our destinies are written—God will not always frown upon us!"

"Dear father!" muttered Jacinto, "we are of the Spaniards' faith, and we will go back to our country."

"It cannot be!—never can it be!" said Abdalla, in tones that were not the less impressive for being uttered in a whisper "The hills of thy childhood, the rivers of thy love—they are passed away from thee;—think of them no more;—never more shalt thou see them! In the land of barbarians, heaven has willed that we should live and die; and be thou reconciled to thy fate, for it shall be glorious! We live not for ourselves; God brings us hither, and for great ends! To night, did I—Hah!"—(One of the sleepers stirred in the passage.)—"Seek some occasion to speak with me, to-morrow, on the march," whispered Abdalla in the page's ear; and then, with a gesture for silence, he immediately retired.

"*Fuego! Quien pasea alli?*" grumbled the voice of Lazaro, as he raised his head from the floor. "*Fu! el muchacho!*—I am ever dreaming of that cursed Turk, that was at my weasand, when Baltasar brained him with the boll of his cross-bow. *Laus tibi, Christe!*—I have a throat left for snoring." And comforting himself with this assurance, before Jacinto had yet vanished from the passage, the man-at-arms again slumbered on his mat.

CHAPTER XXV.

IN the prosecution of his purpose, our historian, the worthy Don Cristobal Ixtlilxochitl, though ever adhering to his 'neglected cavaliers' with a generous constancy, is sometimes seduced into the description of events and scenes of a more general character, not very necessarily connected with his main object, and which those very authors whom he censures, have made the themes of much prolix writing. The

difficulties that beset an historian are ever very great; nor is the least of them found in the necessity of determining how much, or *how little*, he is called upon to record; for though it seems but reasonable he should take it for granted that his readers are entirely unacquainted with the matters he is narrating, and therefore that he should say all that can be said, this is a point in which all readers will not entirely agree with him. Those who have acquired a smattering of his subject, will be offended, if he presume to re-instruct them. For our own part, not recognizing the right of the ignorant to be gratified at the expense of the more learned, we have studied as much as is possible, so to curtail the exuberances of our original as to present his readers chiefly with what they cannot know; for which reason, it will be found, we have eschewed many of the memorable incidents of this famous campaign, in which none of the neglected conquerors bore a considerable part; as well as all those minute descriptions which retard the progress of the history. We therefore despatch in a word the glories of the morning that dawned over Tlascala, the gathering together of the Spaniards, who, upon review, were found to muster full thirteen hundred men, and their savage allies, two thousand in number, commanded, as had been anticipated, by Talmeccahua of the tribe Tizatlan.

Amid the roar of trumpets and drums, and the shouts of a vast people, the glittering and feathered army departed from Tlascala, and pursuing its way through those rich savannas covered with the smiling corn and the juicy aloe, which had gained for this valley its name of the Land of Bread, proceeded onwards towards the holy city, Cholula.

What rocky plains were crossed and what rough sierras surmounted, it needs not to detail: before night-fall, the whole army moved over the meadows that environ Cholula; and there, where now the traveller sees naught but a few wretched natives squatting among their earthen cabins, the adventurers be-

held a city of great size, with more than four hundred lofty white towers shining over its spacious dwellings. The magnificent mountains that surrounded it—the sublime Popocatepetl, still breathing forth its lurid vapours,—the forbidding Iztaccihuatl, or the White Woman, looking like the shattered ruins of some fallen planet, vainly concealing their deformities under a vestment of snow,—the sharp and serrated Malinche,—and last (and seen with not the less interest that it intercepted the view towards home,)—the kingly Orizaba, looking peaceful and grand in the east,—made up such a wall of beauty and splendour as does not often confine the valleys of men. But there is one mountain in that singular scene, which human beings will regard with even more interest than those peaks which soar so many weary fathoms above it: the stupendous Teocalli—the *Monte hecho á manos*, (for it was piled up by the hands of human beings,)—reared its huge bulk over the plain; and, while looking on the stately cypresses that shadowed its gloomy summit, men dreamed, as they dream yet, of the nations who raised so astonishing an evidence of their power, without leaving any revealment of their fate. Whence came they? whither went they? From the shadows—back to the shadows.—The farce of ambition, the tragedy of war, so many thousand times repeated in the three great theatres that divided the old world, were performed with the same ceremonies of guilt and misery, with the same glory and the same shame, in a fourth, of which knowledge had not dreamed. The same superstitions which heaped up the pyramids and the Parthenon, were at work on the Teocallis of America; and the same pride which built a Babylon to defy the assaults of time, gave to his mouldering grasp the tombs and the palaces of Palenque. The people of Tenochtitlan and Cholula worshipped their ancient gods among the ruined altars of an older superstition.

Great crowds issued from this city—the Mecca of

Anahuac—to witness the approach of the Spaniards; but although they bore the same features, and the same decorations, though perhaps of a better material, with the Tlascalans, it was observed by Don Amador, that they displayed none of the joy and triumph, with which his countrymen had been ushered into Tlascala. In place of these, their countenances expressed a dull curiosity; and though they kissed the earth and flung the incense, as usual, in their manner of salutation, they seemed impelled to these ceremonies more by fear than affection. He remarked also with some surprise, that when they came to extend their compliments to the allies,—the Tlascalans, from their chief down to the meanest warrior, requited them only with frowns. All these peculiarities were explained to him by De Morla :

“In ancient days,” said the cavalier, “the Cholulans were a nation of republicans, like the Tlascalans, and united with them in a fraternal league against their common enemies, the Mexicans. In course of time, however, the people of the holy city were gained over by the bribes or promises of the foe; and entering into a secret treaty, they obeyed its provisions so well, as to throw off the mask on the occasion of a great battle, wherein they perfidiously turned against their friends, and, aided by the Mexicans, defeated them with great slaughter. From that day, they have remained the true vassals of Mexico; and, from that day, the Tlascalans have not ceased to regard them with the most deadly and unrelenting hatred.”

“The hatred is just; and I marvel they do not fall upon these base knaves forthwith!” said Amador.

“It is the command of Don Hernan, that Tlascala shall now preserve her wrath for Tenochtitlan; and such is his influence, that, though he cannot allay the heart-burnings, yet can he, with a word, restrain the hands of his allies. Concerning the gloomy indifference of these people,” continued De Morla, “as now manifested, it needs only to inform you how we dis-

covered, or, rather, (for I will not afflict you with the details,) how we punished a similar treachery, wherein they meditated our own destruction, more than half a year ago, when we entered their town, on our march to Mexico. Having discovered their plot to destroy us, we met them with a perfidious craft which might have been rendered excusable by their own, had we, like them, been demi-barbarians; but which, as we are really civilized and Christian men, I cannot help esteeming both dishonest and atrocious. We assembled their nobles and priests in the court of the building we occupied; and having closed the gates, and charged them once or twice with their guilt, we fell upon them; and some of them having escaped and roused the citizens, we carried the war into the streets, and up to the temples: and so well did we prosper that day, and the day that followed, (for we fought them during two entire days,) that, with the assistance of our Tlascalans, of whom we had an army with us, we slaughtered full six thousand of them, and that without losing the life of a single Spaniard."

"Dios mio!" cried Don Amador, "we had not so many killed in all the siege of Rhodes! Six thousand men! I am not certain that even treachery could excuse the destruction of so many lives."

"It was a bloody and most awful spectacle," said De Morla, with feeling. "We drove the naked wretches (I say naked, señor, for we gave them no time to arm;) to the pyramids, especially to that which holds the altar of their chief god,—the god of the air; and here, señor, it was melancholy, to see the miserable desperation with which they died; for, having, at first, refused them quarter, they declined to receive it, when pity moved us afterwards to grant it. About the court of this pyramid there were many wooden buildings, as well as tabernacles of the like material among the towers, on the top. These we fired; and thus attacked them with arms and flames. What ruin the fire failed to inflict on the temple, they

accomplished with their own hands; for, señor, having a superstitious belief, that, the moment a sacrilegious hand should tear away the foundations of their great temple, floods should burst out from the earth to overwhelm the impious violator, they began to raze it with their own hands; willing, in their madness, to perish by the wrath of their god, so that their enemies should perish with them. I cannot express to you the horrible howls, with which they beheld the fragments fall from the walls of the pyramid, without calling up the watery earthquake: then, indeed, with these howls, they ran to the summit, and crazily pitched themselves into the burning towers, or flung themselves from the dizzy top,—as if, in their despair, thinking that even their gods had deserted them!”

“It was an awful chastisement, and, I fear me, more awful than just,” said Amador. “After this, it is not wonderful the men of Cholula should not receive us with joy.”

Many evidences of the horrors of that dreadful day were yet revealed, as Don Amador entered into the city. The marks of fire were left on various houses of stone, and, here and there, were vacuities, covered with blackened wrecks, where, doubtless, had stood more humble and combustible fabrics.

The countenance of Cortes was observed to be darkened by a frown, as he rode through this well-remembered scene of his cruelty; but perhaps he thought less of remorse and penitence, than of the spirit of hatred and desperation evinced by his victims,—as if, in truth, the late occurrences at Mexico had persuaded him, that a similar spirit was waking and awaiting him there.—It was in his angry moment, and just as he halted at the portals of a large court-yard, wherein stood the palace he had chosen for his quarters, that two Indians, of an appearance superior to any Don Amador had yet seen, and followed by a train of attendants bearing heavy burthens, suddenly passed from the crowd of Cholulans, and approached the general.

"Señor," said De Morla, in a low voice, to his friend, "observe these new ambassadors;—they are of the noblest blood of the city; the elder,—he that hath the gold grains hanging to his nostrils, in token that he belongs to the order of *Teuclic*, or Princes by Merit, is one of the lords of the Four Quarters of Mexico—the quarter Tlatelolco, wherein is our garrison. His name, Itzquauhtzin, will be, to you, unpronounceable. The youth that bears himself so loftily, is no less than a nephew of the king himself, and the scarlet fillet around his hair, denotes that he has arrived at the dignity of what we should call a chief commander,—a military rank that not even the king can claim, without having performed great actions in the field. 'Tis a sore day for Montezuma, when he sends us such princely ambassadors.—I will press forward, and do the office of interpreter; for destiny, love, and my mother wit, together, have given me more of the Mexican jargon, than any of my companions."

As the ambassadors approached, Don Amador had leisure to observe them. Both were of good stature and countenance; their loins were girt with tunics of white cotton cloth, studded and bordered with bunches of feathers, and hanging as low as the knee; and over the shoulders of both were hung large mantles of many brilliant colours, curiously interwoven, their ends so knotted together in front, as to fall down in graceful folds, half concealing the swarthy chest. Their sandals were secured with scarlet thongs, crossed and gartered to the calf. Their raven locks, which were of great length, were knotted together, in a most fantastic manner, with ribands, from the points of which, on the head of the elder, depended many little ornaments, that seemed jewels of gold and precious stones; while from the fillets, that braided the hair of the younger, besides an abundance of the same ornaments, there were many tufts of crimson cotton-down, swinging to and fro in the wind. In addition to these badges of military dis-

tion, (for every tuft, thus worn, was the reward and evidence of some valiant exploit,) this young prince—he seemed not above twenty-five years old—wore, as had been noticed by De Morla, the red fillet of the House of Darts,—an order, not so much of nobility as of knighthood, entitling its possessor to the command of an army. His bearing was, indeed, lofty, but not disdainful; and though, when making his obeisance, he neither stooped so low, nor kissed his hand with so much humility, as his companion, this seemed to proceed more from a consciousness of his own rank, than from any disrespect to the Christian leader.

“What will these dogs with me now?” cried Cortes, at whose feet, (for he had dismounted,) the attendants had thrown their burthens, and were proceeding to display their contents. “Doth Montezuma think to appease me for the blood of my brothers? and pay for Spanish lives with robes of cotton and trinkets of gold?—What say the hounds?”

“They say,” responded De Morla to his angry general, “that the king welcomes you back again to his dominions, to give him reparation for the slaughter of his people.”

“Hah!” exclaimed the leader, fiercely. “Doth he beard me with complaint, when I look for penitence and supplication?”

“In token of his love, and of his assured persuasion that you now return to punish the murderers of his subjects, and then to withdraw your followers from his city for ever,” said De Morla, giving his attention less to Cortes than to the lord of Tlatelolco, “he sends you these garments, to protect the bodies of your new friends from the snows of Ithualco, as well as——”

“The slave!” cried Don Hernan, spurning the pack that lay at his foot, and scattering its gaudy textures over the earth: “If he give me no mail to protect my friends from the knives of his assassins, I will trample even upon his false heart, as I do upon his worthless tribute!”

"Shall I translate your excellency's answer word for word?" said De Morla, tranquilly. "If it be left to myself, I should much prefer veiling it in such palatable language, as my limited knowledge will afford."

But the scowling general had already turned away, as if to humble the ambassadors with the strongest evidence of contempt, and to prove the extremity of his displeasure; and it needed no interpretation of words to convince the noble savages of the futility of their ministry. The lord of Tlatelolco bowed again to the earth, and again kissed his hand, as if in humble resignation, while the retreating figure of Don Hernan vanished under the low door of his dwelling; but the younger envoy, instead of imitating him, drew himself proudly up, and looked after the general with a composure, that changed, as Don Amador thought, to a smile. But if such a mark of satisfaction—for it bore more the character of elation than contempt,—did illuminate the bronzed visage of the prince, it remained not there for an instant. He cast a quiet and grave eye upon the curious cavaliers who surrounded him, and then beckoning his attendants from their packs, he strode, with his companion, composedly away.

"In my mind," said the neophyte, following him with his eye, and rather soliloquizing than addressing himself to any of the neighbouring cavaliers, "there was more of dignity and contempt in the smile of that heathen prince, than in all the rage of my friend Don Hernan."

"Truly, he is a very proper-looking and well-measured knave," said the voice of Duero. "But the general has some deep policy at the bottom of all this anger."

"By my faith, I think so, now for the first time!" exclaimed the neophyte; "for, although unable to see the drift of such a stratagem, I cannot believe that the señor Cortes would adopt a course, that seems to savour so much of injustice, without a very discreet and politic object."

re the discourse of the cavaliers was cut short by sudden appearance of Fabueno the secretary. "What wilt thou, Lorenzo?" said his patron. "Has he again refused to tilt with thee? I very much commend the zeal with which thou pursuest thine enterprises; but thou shouldst remember, that Lazaro sometimes, be weary after a day's march."

"Señor, 'tis not *that*," said the secretary. "But now, as Baltasar told me, he saw the page so very rudely haled away by one of Cortes's men; and I thought your favour might be glad to him, for the boy seemed frightened."

"I will straightway see that no wrong be done even by the general," said Amador, quickly, and went toward the door into which he had seen Cortes enter. "I marvel very much that my good knight should not protect him."

"Señor," said Fabueno, "the knight is in greater danger to-day than yesterday. He took no note of us, when we came to this palace; but instantly he fled himself in some distant chamber, where, as he told me, he was scourging himself."

"Thou shouldst not talk, with the soldiers, of Calasaid Amador, with a sigh. "Get thee to Marco. If my kinsman need me, I will presently be with him." As saying, he discharged the secretary at the door, and those servants who guarded it, not presuming to deny admittance to a man of such rank, he was immediately ushered into the presence of Cortes.

CHAPTER XXVI.

In a low but spacious apartment, the walls and floor of which were both covered with mats, the newly-found Don Hernan, attended by Sandoval and two other cavaliers, busy, to all appearance, with the examination of the page and a Moorish slave of Cortes's own household, whom he seemed to con-

front with the other. It needed no more than the tears which Amador discovered on the cheeks of the youth, to rouse him to a feeling very like anger.

"Señor," said he, stepping forward to the side of Jacinto, and looking gravely on his judge, "I have exercised the privilege of a master,—or rather, as I should say, of a servant,—for this boy is in the ward of Don Gabriel, whom I myself follow,—to enter into your presence, without the ceremony of a previous request; for which liberty, if it offend you, ask your pardon. But I was told the boy Jacinto was dragged away by one of your excellency's menials; and I claim, as asking in the stead of his master, to know for what offence?"

"By my conscience, for none at all!" said Cortes, courteously; "at least, for none of his own commission. And had he truly been guilty, both of treason and desertion, I should have pardoned him, for the precocious shrewdness of his answers. Señor," continued the general, "it was my intention to beseech your presence at this examination; and nothing but the suddenness of it, as well as the present defection among my servants, could have caused me to defer the invitation for a moment. By my conscience, you have a treasure of wisdom, in this boy!"

This was an assurance Don Amador did by no means deny: for, in addition to the singular address with which he adapted himself to the humours of the knight, he had seen in Jacinto many other evidences of a discretion so much in advance of his years, as to cause him no little wonder; added to which, the incident of the past night, in which the page had stumbled upon a name, and indeed (for the after explanations had not removed the first impression,) a story, which he did not remember to have breathed to any living creature, had attached to the youth a sort of respect that bordered almost on superstition. But Don Hernan gave the cavalier no time for reflections.

"Señor Don Amador," said he, "the fault, if there

be any, which we are now striving to investigate, lies, not in the page, but in his father, Sidi Abdalla, the cannonier; who is charged by my varlet here, this unconverted heathen, to be meditating, if not now engaged in the accomplishment of a very heinous, and yet, let me add, for your satisfaction, a very improbable conspiracy. This is charged to be nothing less than desertion from our standard, with design to throw himself into the arms of the enemy; and what makes the matter worse, allowing it for a moment to be credible, is, that he plots to carry away with him all his countrymen who are slaves with us, in number, I think, somewhat above half a score."

"This is, assuredly," said Don Amador, "a very vile offence; for which, if guilty, I must needs allow, the Sidi deserves to suffer. Yet, I agree with your excellency, the design seems quite as incredible as its accomplishment must be impossible."

"No one," said Cortes, "could have shown this with better argument than this same weeping boy; for, 'First,' said he, 'tis wrong to receive the accusation of an unconverted man against a Christian; and such an infidel hound is Yacub,—whom I will, at some future day, give over to be burned for his idolatry; but, at present, I cannot spare so precious a servant, for he is an excellent cook, and a good maker of arrow-heads for the crossbowmen.—In addition to this argument, señor," continued the general, "the boy advances me another of still more force; 'For how,' says he, shrewdly, 'would my father leave his Christian masters and protectors, to go over to savages, whose language he cannot understand, and who would sacrifice him as a victim to their detestable gods?'—which gods may heaven sink into the pit, whence they came! and I say, Amen!—Now, though one part of this argument is answered by the subtle art of Yacub; for whether he have Yacub or any other Moor who hath picked something of the tongue, to interpret for him, or

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whether he have no interpreter at all, it is not the less certain, that, the moment he entrusts himself into the power of the barbarians, that moment will he be clapped into a great cage like a wild beast, and devoured what time he is fat enough for the maws of their diabolical divinities; I say, nevertheless, for that very reason, it is not probable Abdalla should be so besotted a fool."

"Please your highness," said Yacub, with the obstinacy of one who presumed on his master's indulgence, or on the strength of his cause, "he urged me, last night, at the pyramid of Tlascala; and this noble gentleman, as well as this boy, saw me in his company."

Don Amador started, as he perceived the eyes of Yacub fastened on him, as well as those of every other individual in the chamber. The look that Jacinto gave him was one of terror and beseeching earnestness.

"Señor," said he, hesitating a little, "though what I have to say, may, in part, confirm the charge of this fellow, I cannot scruple to speak it; and though I may not aver, on mine own knowledge, that I beheld, last night, either this man Yacub, or his countryman, Abdalla, yet must I admit that I saw, stealing by the basis of that heathen temple, three men, whom my friend De Morla, who accompanied me, pronounced to be the cannonier and two of your excellency's servants."—Jacinto wrung his hands.—"But what passed between them," the cavalier went on, "whether they were hatching a plot, or discoursing together of their hard fate, as would seem reasonable for men like them, that have neither friends nor country, I cannot take upon me to pronounce; though, from what I know of Abdalla, as a courageous and honest man, I am fain to think, their communication could not have been of an evil nature."

"He said," muttered the treacherous Moor, "that, provided he had but some one to interpret for him, he had no fear of the Mexicans; but could promise us

much favour and wealth from their kings, by virtue of certain arts possessed by his son; and thereby he hinted the boy was an enchanter."

All started at this sudden announcement, and none more than Don Amador de Leste; for though, as he had said himself, he was, in his cooler moments, very sceptical in affairs of magic, this incredulity was no consequence either of nature or education; and besides the shock that had been given to his doubts by the disclosures of De Morla, the story of Jacinto, so unaccountably begun, and so abruptly terminated, had made a deeper impression on his mind, than such a trifle should.—Its importance had been imputed by his own feelings; but either he did not remember, or he knew not that.—He stared at Jacinto, who stood pale as death and trembling, now rolling his eyes wildly on Don Hernan, and now on his patron. Before the latter could summon composure to answer, he was relieved by the general saying, humorously—

"I cannot doubt that this little caitiff is an enchanter, because he has the faculty of exciting both admiration and pity in an eminent degree; and, though I doubt the power of such a charm over the ears of barbarians that delight in the thunder of wooden drums, and the yelling uproar of sea-shell trumpets, yet I can believe, for it has been told me by good judges, that the art with which he touches his lute, is as magical as it is marvellous."

The boy clasped his hands in delight, and seemed as if he would have thrown himself at the feet of his judge.

"Wherefore, my most worthy and honoured friend," continued Cortes, "have no fear that I will rob thee of so serviceable a henchman. I could not burn so pretty a log in the fire that was kindled for one who had sold his soul; and I cannot, by allowing the claims of a rival to lawful magic, kill my astrologer Botello with envy."

"He has a talisman round his neck, wherein is a devil, that I have overheard him talking to!" said the resolute Yacub.

"Thou art an ass," said Cortes, laughing at the trepidation of Jacinto; for he again turned pale, and lifted his hands to his neck, as if both to confess and guard his treasure. "'Tis some gewgaw, given him by his mother, or, perhaps, by some sweetheart wench;—for these Moorish boys are in love when a Christian urchin is yet in his grammar.—Señor,"—he addressed himself to the neophyte,—“you may perceive that the very grossness of Yacub’s credulity has destroyed the force of his testimony; for he who can believe such a junior as this to be a conjurer, will give credit to any other ridiculous imagination. I will now confess to you, that, beside these charges, which are already answered, there is only one more circumstance against Abdalla; and that is, that at the very moment of our halt, and while engaged in the audience with those ambassadors, (whom I treated somewhat harshly, but for a cunning purpose, which you will soon understand,) he vanished away, in company with another dog of my household called Ayub; and hath not been since seen. Nevertheless, I attach no more importance to this matter than to the others; but, I swear to heaven, if he be caught stealing turkeys, or any such trumpery things from these villains of Cholula, I will give him to the bastinado!”

“Señor,” said Amador, earnestly, “the Sidi is of too magnanimous a nature to steal turkeys.”

“I will take Don Amador’s word for it, then. But I see the page is still in some mortal fright, as dreading, if he remain longer in our presence, lest some new accusation should be brought against him.”

“If Jacinto be absolved from censure, and is no longer desired by your excellency, I will withdraw him from your presence; and, thanking you, señor, for the mildness with which you have questioned him, I will beg your permission to take my own leave.”

Don Hernan bowed low, as the neophyte withdrew with Jacinto; he waved his hand to Yacub, and the Moor immediately retired.

“What think ye now, my masters?” he cried, as

soon as these were out of hearing;—"Is it possible this stupid cannonier hath either the wit or the spirit to hatch me a brood of treason, to help the kites of Mexico?"

"If he have," said Sandoval, "he should hang."

"Very true, son Gonzalo," said the general; "for in our condition, to be suspected, should be a crime worthy death, especially in so contemptible a creature as a Moor.—Didst thou observe what mortal consternation beset our worthy and very precise friend, Don Amador, when Yacub called his boy a conjurer?"

"I think, that should be examined into," said Sandoval; "for if he be, 'twill be well to give him to Botello, as a pupil; lest Botello should be, some day, knocked on the head, as is not improbable, from his ever thrusting it into jeopardy, and we be left without a diviner."

"By my conscience, 'tis well thought on," said Cortes, laughing, "for this boy, if he had but as good a reputation, is much superior in docility, as well as shrewder in apprehension; whereas Botello hath such a thick-head enthusiasm for his art, as to be somewhat unmanageable; and, every now and then, he prophesies me all wrong; as was the case, when he anointed the wound of De Leste's secretary, and stupidly told him 'twould be well in a few hours: and yet, all the camp knew, the lad was near losing his arm."

"Botello excuses himself there," said Sandoval, "by protesting that his injunctions were disobeyed, especially that wherein he charged the youth not to touch his weapon for twenty-four hours; whereas he killed a man, that very night, on the pyramid, very courageously, as I witnessed,—though the man was hurt before; for I had charged him with my own partisan."—

"Amigo mio," said Cortes, abruptly, "in the matter of these Moors, I must have thine aidance. I know not how it may have entered into the brain of

such a boor, to suppose he could make himself useful to the frowning infidels in Tenochtitlan; but I would sooner give them a dead lion than a living dog. If thou hast any very cunning and discreet rogues among thy fighting men, send them, in numbers of two and three, secretly about the city; and especially charge some that they watch at the gate that opens to Mexico."

"I will do so," said Sandoval, "and I will myself hunt about the town till I find the rascal.—Shall I kill him?"

"If it appear to thee he is deserting, let him be slain in the act. As for Ayub, if he be found in the cannonier's company, bring me him alive: I will hang him for an example; for in his death shall no intercessor be offended. I have no doubt, that, for the boy's sake, both Don Amador and Calavar would beg for Abdalla, if he were brought a prisoner; and it would grieve me to deny them. Kill *him*, then, my son, if thou findest him, and art persuaded he is a deserter."

With this charge, very emphatically pronounced, and very composedly received, the friends separated.

CHAPTER XXVII.

DURING the whole time of the march from Tlascala to Cholula, an unusual gloom lay upon the spirits of Calavar; and so great was his abstraction, that, though pursuing his way with a sort of instinct, he remained as insensible to the presence of his kinsman as to the attentions of his followers. He rode at a distance from the rear of the army; and such was the immobility of his limbs and features, saving when, stung by some secret thought, he raised his ghastly eyes to heaven, that a stranger, passing him on the path, might have deemed that his grave charger moved along under the weight of a stiffened corse, not yet dis-

robed of its arms, rather than that of a living cavalier. When the army halted at noon to take food, he retired, with his attendants, to the shadow of a tree; where, without dismounting, or receiving the fruits which Jacinto had gathered, to tempt him to eat, he sat in the same heavy stupor, until the march was resumed. Neither food nor water crossed his lips, during the entire day; nor did the neophyte suffer any to be proffered him, when he came to reflect that this day was an anniversary, which the knight was ever accustomed to observe with the most ascetic abstinence and humiliation. For this reason, also, though lamenting the necessity of such an observance, he neither presumed himself to vex his kinsman with attentions, nor suffered any others to intrude upon his privacy, excepting, indeed, the Moorish page, whose gentle arts were so wont to dispel the gathering clouds. But this day, even Jacinto failed to attract his notice; and, despairing of the power of any thing but time, to terminate the paroxysm, he ceased his efforts, and contented himself with keeping a distant watch on all Don Gabriel's movements, lest some disaster might happen to him on the journey. No sooner, as had been hinted by Fabueno, had the army arrived at its quarters in the sacred city, than the knight betook him to the solitude of a chamber in the very spacious building; where, after a time, he so far shook off his lethargy, as to desire the presence of the chaplain, with whom he had remained ever since, engaged in his devotions. Hither, guided by Marco, came now Don Amador, conducting Jacinto. The interview with Cortes had swallowed up more than an hour, and when the neophyte stood before the curtained door of his kinsman, a light, flashing through the irregular folds, dispelled the darkness of the chamber. As he paused for an instant, he heard the low voice of the priest, saying,

“Sin no more with doubt.—*Spera in Deo*: grace is in heaven, and mercy knoweth no bounds.—*Misereatur tui omnipotens Deus.*”—

A few other murmurs came to his ear; and then the chaplain, pushing aside the curtain, issued from the apartment.

"Heaven be with thee, my son," he said to Amador; "thy kinsman is greatly disordered, but not so much now as before."

"Is it fitting I should enter, father?"

"Thy presence may be grateful to him; but surely," he continued, in an under voice, "it were better for the unhappy knight, if he were among the priests and physicians of his own land. A sore madness afflicts him: he thinks himself beset with spectres.—I would thou hadst him in Spain!"

"If heaven grant us that grace!" said Amador, sorrowfully.—"But he believes that God will call him to his rest, among the heathen.—Tarry thou at the door, Jacinto," he went on, when the father had departed; "have thyself in readiness, with thy lute for perhaps he may be prevailed upon to hear thee sing; in which case, I have much hope, the evil spirit will depart from him."

He passed into the chamber: the knight was on his knees before a little crucifix, which he had placed on a massive Indian chair; but though he beat his bosom with a heavy hand, no sound of prayer came from his lips. Don Amador placed himself at his side and stood in reverential silence, until his kinsman, heaving a deep sigh, rose up, and turning his haggard countenance towards him, said,—

"Neither penance nor prayer, neither the remorse of the heart nor the benediction of the priest, can wipe away the sorrow that comes from sin. God alone is the forgiver;—but God will not *always* forgive!"

"Say not so, my father," cried Amador, earnestly; "for it is a deep crime to think that heaven is not ever merciful."

"Keep thyself free from the stain of blood-guiltiness," said Don Gabriel, with a manner so mild, that the neophyte had good hope the fit had indeed left

him, "and mercy will not be denied thee.—Have I not afflicted thee, my friend?" he continued faintly. "Thou wilt have much to forgive me; but not long. I will remember, in my death hour, that thou hast not forsaken me."

"Never will I again leave thee!" said Amador, fervently. "I forgot thee once; and besides the pang of contrition for that act, heaven punished me with a grief, that I should not have known, had I remained by thy side. But now, my father, wilt thou not eat and drink, and suffer Jacinto to sing to thee?"

"I may neither eat nor drink this night," said Calavar; "but methinks I can hear the innocent orphan chant the praises of the Virgin; for to such she will listen!"

Amador strode to the door; but Jacinto had vanished—He had stolen away, the moment that his patron entered.

"Perhaps he has gone to fetch his instrument. Run thou in search of him, Marco, and bid him hasten."

Before the novice could again address himself to his kinsman, Marco returned. The page was not to be found; the sentinel at the door had seen him pass into the court-yard, but whether he had re-entered or not, he knew not;—he had not noted.

"Is it possible," thought Don Amador, "that the boy could so wilfully disobey me? Perhaps the general hath sent for him again: for, notwithstanding all his protestations of satisfaction, it seemed to me, that, while he spoke, there was still a something lurking in his eye, which boded no good to Abdalla. I will look for the boy myself."

He charged Marco to remain by his lord, sought an audience with the general, whom he found engaged in earnest debate with Duero, De Leon, and other high officers. Don Hernan satisfied him that he had not sent for Jacinto,—that he had not thought of Abdalla; and with an apology for his intrusion, the novice instantly withdrew.

"The story is true!" said Cortes with a frown, "and that pestilent young cub of heathenism has fled to give the traitor warning. But he that passes, unquestioned, at the gate where Sandoval stands the watchman, must have the devil for his leader, or, at least, his companion. I hope he will not murder the boy; for he is a favourite with Calavar, a subtle knave, a good twangler; and it is natural he should play me even a knave's trick for his father!"

In the meanwhile, after hunting in vain about the different quarters of the building, as well as the courtyard, for the vanished Jacinto, the novice returned to the chamber of his kinsman. But Calavar also had disappeared,—not, indeed, in disorder, but in great apparent tranquillity; and he had commanded Marco not to follow him.

"He has gone to the fields," muttered Amador; "such is his practice at this season: but there is no good can come of solitude. I know not what to think of that boy; but assuredly, this time, it will be but my duty to censure him." And so saying, Don Amador also passed into the open air.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

It was late in the night; a horizontal moon flung the long shadows of the houses over the wide streets of Cholula, when the knight Calavar, wrapped in his black mantle, strode along through the deserted city. With no definite object before him, unless to fly, or perhaps to give way, in solitude, to the bitter thoughts that oppressed him, he suffered himself to be guided as much by accident as by his wayward impulses; and as he passed on, at every step, some mutation of his fancies, or some trivial incident on the way, conspired to recall his disorder. Now, as a bat flitted by, or an owl flew, hooting, from its perch among some of those ruins, which yet raised their broken

and blackened walls, in memory of the cruelty of his countrymen, the knight started aghast, and a mortal fear came over him ; for, in these sounds and sights, his disturbed senses discovered the signs of the furies that persecuted him ; and even the night-breeze, wailing round some lonely corner, or whispering among the shrubbery of a devastated garden, seemed to him the cries of haunting spirits.

"Miserere mei, Deus!" muttered Don Gabriel, as a tree, bowing away from the wind, let down a moonbeam through a fissure on his path—"the white visage will not leave me!—Heavy was the sin, heavy is the punishment! for even mine own fancies are become my chastisers."

Thus, at times, conscious, in part, of his infirmity, and yet yielding ever, with the feebleness of a child, to the influence of unreal horrors, he wandered about, sometimes driven from his path by what seemed a gaunt spectre flitting before him, sometimes impelled onwards by a terror that followed behind : thus he roved about, he knew not whither, until he found himself, by chance, in the neighbourhood of the great temple, the scene of the chief atrocities enacted on that day which has been called, by a just metonymy, the Massacre of Cholula. Here it was, as had been mentioned by De Morla, that the miserable natives, huddled together in despair, had made their last cry to their gods, and perished under the steel and flames of the Christians ; and the memorials of their fate were as plainly written as if the tragedy had been the work of the previous day. No carcasses, indeed, lay crowded among the ruins, no embers smouldered on the square ; weeds had grown upon the place of murder, as if fattening on the blood that had besprinkled their roots ; life had utterly vanished from the spot ; and it presented the appearance of a desert in the bosom of a populous city.

A great wall, running round the temple, had enclosed it in a large court, once covered with the houses of priests and devotees. The wall was shat-

tered and fallen, the dwellings burned and demolished; and the pyramid, itself crumbling into ruins, lay like the body of some huge monster among its severed and decaying members. The flags of stone, tumbled by the victims, in their fury, from its sides and terraces, though they had not called up the subterraneous rivers, had exposed the perishable earth, that composed the body of the mound, to the vicissitudes of the weather; and, under the heavy tropical rains, it was washing rapidly away. The sanctuaries yet stood on the summit, but with their walls mutilated, and their roofs burnt; and they served only to make the horror picturesque. A wooden cross of colossal dimensions, raised by the conquerors, in impious attestation that God had aided them in the labour of slaughter, flung high its rugged arms, towering above the broken turrets, and gave the finish of superstition to the monument of wrath. It was a place of ruins, dark, lugubrious, and forbidding; and as Don Gabriel strode among the massive fragments, he found himself in a theatre congenial with his gloomy and wrecking spirit.

It was not without many feelings of dismay that he plunged among the ruins; for his imagination converted each shattered block into a living phantasm. But still he moved on, as if urged by some irresistible impulse, entangling himself in the labyrinth of decay, until he scarcely knew whither to direct his steps. Whether it was reality, or some coinage of his brain, that presented the spectacle, he knew not; but he was arrested in his toilsome progress by the apparition of several figures rising suddenly among the ruins, and as suddenly vanishing.

"Heaven pity me!" he cried: "They come feathered like the fiends of the infidel! But I care not, so they bring no more the white face, that is so ghastly!—And yet, this is her day!—this is her day!"

Perhaps it was his imagination, that decked out the spectres with such ornaments; but a less heated spectator might have discovered in them, only the figures

of strolling savages. With his spirits strongly agitated, his brain excited for the reception of any chimaera, he followed the direction in which these figures seemed to have vanished; and this bringing him round a corner of the pyramid, into the moonshine, he instantly found himself confronted with a spectacle that froze his blood with horror. In a spot, where the ruins had given space for the growth of weeds and grass, and where the vision could not be so easily confounded,—illuminated by the moonbeams as if by the lustre of the day,—he beheld a figure, seemingly of a woman, clad in robes of white of an oriental habit, full before him, and turning upon him a countenance as wan as death.

“Miserere mei, Deus!” cried the knight, dropping on his knees, and bowing his forehead to the earth. “If thou comest to persecute me yet, I am here, and I have not forgot thee!”

The murmur, as of a voice, fell on his ear, but it brought with it no intelligence. He raised his eye;—dark shadows flitted before him; yet he saw nothing save the apparition in white: it stood yet in his view; and still the pallid visage dazzled him with its unnatural radiance and beauty.

“Miserere mei! miserere mei!” he cried, rising to his feet, and tottering forwards. “I live but to lament thee, and I breathe but to repent! Speak to me, daughter of the Alpujarras! speak to me, and let me die!”

As he spoke, the vision moved gently and slowly away. He rushed forwards, but with knees smiting together; and, as the white visage turned upon him again, with its melancholy loveliness, and with a gesture as of warning or terror, his brain spun round, his sight failed him, and he fell to the earth in a deep swoon.

CHAPTER XXIX.

MOTION is the life of the sea: the surge dashes along in its course, while the watery particles that gave it bulk and form, remain in their place to renew and continue the coming billows, heaving to each successive oscillation, but not departing with it. Thus the mind,—an ocean more vast and unfathomable than that which washes our planet,—fluctuates under the impulses of its stormy nature, and passes not away, until the last agitation, like that which shall swallow up the sea, or convert its elements into a new matter, lifts it from its continent, and introduces it to a new existence. Emotion is its life, each surge of which seems to bear it leagues from its resting-place; and yet it remains passively to abide and figure forth the influence of new commotions.—Thus passed the billow through the spirit of Calavar; and when it had vanished, the spirit ceased from its tumult, subsided, and lay in tranquillity to await other shocks,—for others were coming.—When he awoke from his lethargy, his head was supported on the knee of a human being, who chafed his temple and hands, and bowed his body as well as his feeble strength allowed, to recall the knight to life. Don Gabriel raised his eyes to this benignant and ministering creature; and in the disturbed visage, that hung over his own, thought,—for his mind was yet wandering,—he beheld the pallid features of the vision.

"I know thee, and I am ready!" cried Don Gabriel. "Pity me and forgive me;—for I die at thy feet, as thou didst at mine!"

"Señor mio! I am Jacinto," exclaimed the page, (for it was he,) frightened at the distraction of the knight;—"thy page, thy poor page, Jacinto."

"Is it so indeed?" said Calavar, surveying him wildly.—"And the spectre that did but now smite me to the earth!—hath she left me?"

"Dear master, there is no spectre with us," said the Moorish boy. "We are alone among the ruins."

"God be thanked!" said the knight, vehemently, "for if I should look on it more, I should die.—Yet would that I could!—would that I could! for in death there is peace,—in the grave there is forgetfulness!—This time, was it no delusion either of the senses or the brain: mine eye-sight was clear, my head sane, and I saw it, as I see mine own despair!—Pray for me, boy!" he continued, falling on his knees, and dragging the page down beside him; "pray for me!" he cried, gazing piteously at the youth; "pray for me! God will listen to *thy* prayers, for thou art innocent, and I am miserable. Pray that God may forgive me, and suffer me to die;—for this is the day of my sin!"

"Dear master," said the page, trembling, "let us return to our friends."

"Thou wilt not pray? thou wilt not beseech God for me?" said Calavar, mournfully. "Thou wilt be merciful, when thou knowest my misery! Heaven sends thee for mine intercessor. I confess to thee, as to heaven, for thou art without sin. Manhood brings guile and impurity, evil deeds and malign thoughts; but a child is pure in the eyes of God; and the prayers of his lips will be as incense, when wrath turns from the beseeching of men. Hear thou my sin; and then, if heaven bid thee not to curse, then pray for me, boy!—then pray for me!"

In great perturbation, for he knew not how to check the knight's distraction, and feared its increasing violence, Jacinto knelt, staring at him, his hands fettered in the grasp of his master; who, returning his gaze with such looks of woe and contrition, as a penitent may give to heaven, said wildly, yet not incoherently,—

"Deeply dyed with sin am I, and sharply scourged with retribution! Age comes upon me before its time, but brings me nothing but memory—nothing but memory!—Gray hairs and wrinkles, disease and

feebleness, are the portions of my manhood; for my youth was sinful, and guilt has made me old! Oh that I might see the days, when I was like to thee!—when I was like to thee, Jacinto!—when I knew innocence, and offended not God. But the virtues of childhood weigh not in the balance against the crimes of after years: as the child dieth, heaven opens to him; as the man sinneth, so doth he perish.—*Misereere mei, Deus!* and forgive me my day in the Alpujarras!”

As Don Gabriel pronounced the name of those mountains, wherein, Jacinto knew, his father had drawn the first breath of life, and around which was shed, for every Moor, such interest as belongs to those places where our fathers have fought and bled, the page began to listen with curiosity, although his alarm had not altogether subsided.

“Long years have passed; many days of peril and disaster have come and gone; and yet I have not forgotten the Alpujarras!” cried Calavar, shivering as he uttered the word; “for there did joy smile, and hope sicken, and fury give me to clouds and darkness forever. Those hills were the haunts of thy forefathers, Jacinto; and there, after the royal city had fallen, and Granada was ruled by the monarchs of Spain, they fled for refuge, all those noble Moriscos, who were resolute to die in their own mistaken faith, as well,—in after years,—as many others, who had truly embraced the religion of Christ, but were suspected by the bigoted of our people, and persecuted with rigour. How many wars were declared against those unhappy fugitives,—now to break down the last strong hold of the infidel, and now to punish the suspected Christian,—thou must know, if thy sire be a true Moor of Granada. In mine early youth, and in one of the later crusades, that were proclaimed against those misguided mountaineers, went I, to win the name and the laurels of a cavalier. Would that I had never won them, or that they had come to me dead on the battle-field! Know, then, Jacinto, that

my nineteenth summer had not yet fled from me, when I first drew my sword in conflict with men; but if I won me reputation, at that green age, it was because heaven was minded to show me, that shame and sorrow could come as early. In those days, the royal and noble blood of Granada had not been drawn from every vein; many of the princely descendants of the Abencerrages, the Aliatars, the Ganzuls, and the Zegrís, still dwelt among the mountains; and, forgetting their hereditary feuds, united together in common resistance against the Spaniards. With such men for enemies, respected alike for their birth and their valour, the war was not always a history of rapine and barbarity; and sometimes there happened such passages of courtesy and magnanimity between the Christian and Moorish cavaliers, as recalled the memory of the days of chivalry and honour. Among others, who made experience of the heroic greatness of mind of the infidel princes, was I myself; for, in a battle, wherein the Moors prevailed against us, I was left wounded and unhorsed, on the field, to perish, or to remain a prisoner in their hands. In that melancholy condition, while I commended my soul to God, as not thinking I could escape from death, a Moorish warrior of majestic appearance and a soul still more lofty, approached, and had pity on my helplessness, instead of slaying me outright, as I truly expected. 'Thou art noble,' said he, 'for I have seen thy deeds; and though, this day, thou hast shed the blood of a Zegrí, thou shalt not perish like a dog. Mount my horse and fly, lest the approaching squadrons destroy thee; and in memory of this deed, be thou sometimes merciful to the people of Alharef.' Then knew I, that this was Alharef-ben-Ismaíl, the most noble of the Zegrís,—a youth famous, even among the Spaniards, for his courage and humanity; and in gratitude and love, for he was a Christian proselyte, I pledged him my faith, and swore with him the vows of a true friendship. How I have kept mine oath, Alharef!" he cried, lifting his

eyes to the spangled heaven, "thou knowest;—for sometimes *thou* art with my punisher!"

The knight paused an instant, in sorrowful emotion, while Jacinto, borne by curiosity beyond the bounds of fear, bent his head to listen; then making the sign of the cross, and repeating his brief prayer, the cavalier resumed his narrative.

"As my ingratitude was greater than that of other men, so is my sin; for another act of benevolence shall weigh against me for ever!—Why did I not die with my people, when the smiles of perfidy conducted us to the hills, and the sword was drawn upon us sleeping? That night, there was but one escaped the cruel and bloody stratagem; and I, again, owed my life to the virtues of a Moor. Pity me, heaven! for thou didst send me an angel, and I repaid thy mercy with the thankfulness of a fiend!—Know, then, Jacinto, that, in the village wherein was devised and accomplished the murder of my unsuspecting companions, dwelt one that now liveth in heaven. Miserere mei! miserere mei! for she was noble and fair, and wept at the baseness of her kindred!—She covered the bleeding cavalier with her mantle, concealed him from the fury that was unrelenting; and when she had healed his wounds, guided him, in secret, from the den of devils, and dismissed him in safety near to the camp of his countrymen. Know thou now, boy, that this maiden was Zayda, the flower of all those hills, and the star that made them dearer to me than the heaven that was above them; and more thought I of those green peaks and shady valleys that encompassed my love, than the castle of my sire, or the church wherein rested the bones of my mother. Miserere mei! miserere mei! for the faith that was pledged was broken! my lady slept in the arms of Al-haref, and my heart was turned to blackness!—Now thou shalt hear me, and pray for me," continued Don Gabriel, with a look of the wildest and intensest despair, "for my sin is greater than I can bear! Now *shalt thou* hear how I cursed those whom I had

sworn to love; how I sharpened my sword, and with vengeance and fury, went against the village of my betrayers. Oh 'God! how thou didst harden our hearts, when we gave their houses to the flames, and their old men and children to swords and spears! when we looked not at misery, and listened not to supplication, but slew! slew! slew! as though we struck at beasts, and not at human creatures! 'Thou sworest an oath!' cried Alharef. I laughed; for I knew I should drink his blood! 'Be merciful to my people!' he cried,—and I struck him with my sabre. 'Oho!' continued the knight, springing to his feet, wringing the page's hands, and glaring at him with the countenance of a demon, "when he fled from me bleeding, my heart was full of joy, and I followed him with yells of transport!—*This* is the day, I tell thee! this is the day, and the hour! for night could not hide him!—And Zayda! ay, Zayda! Zayda!—when she shielded him with her bosom, when she threw herself before him—*Miserere mei, Deus! miserere mei, Deus!*"—

"And Zayda?" cried the page, meeting his gaze with looks scarcely less expressive of wildness.

"Curse me, or pray for me," said the knight,—
"for I slew her!"

The boy recoiled: Don Gabriel fell on his knees, and, with a voice husky and feeble as a child's, cried,

"I know, now, that thou cursest me, for thou lookest on me with horror! The innocent will not pray for the guilty! the pure and holy have no pity for devils. Curse me then, for her kindred vanished from the earth, and she with them!—curse me, for I left not a drop of her blood flowing in human veins, and none in her's!—curse me, for I am her murderer, and I have not forgot it!—curse me, for God has forsaken me, and nightly her pale face glitters on me with reproach!—curse me, for I am miserable!"

While Don Gabriel still grovelled on the earth, and while the page stood yet regarding him with terror, suddenly there came to the ears of both, the

shouts of soldiers, mingled with the roar of firelocks; and, as three or four cross-bow shafts rattled against the sides of the pyramid, there were visible in the moonlight as many figures of men running among the ruins, now leaping over, now darting around the fragments, as if flying for their lives from a party of armed men, who were seen rushing after them on the square. The knight rose, bewildered, and, as if in the instinct of protection, again grasped the hand of the page. But now the emotions which had agitated the master, seemed transferred to his follower; and Jacinto, trembling and struggling, cried,—

“Señor mio, let me loose! For the sake of heaven, for the sake of the Zayda whom you slew, let me go!—for they are murdering my father!”

But Don Gabriel, in the confusion of his mind, still retained his grasp, and very providentially, as it appeared; for at that very moment, a voice was heard exclaiming,—

“Hold! shoot not *there*: ’tis the Penitent Knight!—Aim at the fliers. Follow and shoot!—follow and shoot!”

Immediately the party of pursuers rushed up to the pair, one of whom paused, while the others, in obedience to his command, continued the chase, ever and anon sending a bolt after the fugitives.

“On, and spare not, ye knaves!” cried Sandoval, for it was this cavalier who now stood at the side of the knight of Rhodes. “On, and shoot! on and shoot! and see that ye bring me the head of the Moor! Oho, my merry little page!” he cried, regarding Jacinto; “you have been playing Sir *Quimichin*, Sir Rat and Sir Spy? A cunning little brat, faith; but we’ll catch thy villain father, notwithstanding!”

The page bowed his head and sobbed, but was silent; and Don Gabriel, rallying his confused spirits a little, said,—

“I know not what you mean, señor. We are no spies, but very miserable penitents.”

“Oh, sir knight, I crave your pardon,” said Sando-

val, without noticing the eccentric portion of his confession, "I meant not to intrude upon your secrecy, but to catch Abdalla, the deserter; of whom, and of whose rogueries, not doubting that this boy has full knowledge, I must beg your permission to conduct him to the general."

"Surely," said Calavar mildly, "if Jacinto have offended, I will not strive to screen him from examination, but only from punishment. I consent you shall lead him to Cortes; and I will myself accompany you."

"It is enough, noble knight, if thou wilt thyself condescend to conduct him," said the cavalier; "whereby I shall be left in freedom to follow a more urgent duty. God save you, sir knight;—I leave the boy in your charge."—So saying, Sandoval pursued hastily after his companions; and Calavar leading the page, now no longer unwilling, (for the Almogavar, with his companions, was long since out of sight,) pursued his melancholy way to the quarters.

CHAPTER XXX.

WHILE these occurrences were transpiring, Don Amador de Leste, in search of the knight, had rambled through the streets, and following, very naturally, the only path with which he was acquainted, soon found himself issuing from that gate by which he had entered from Tlascala. The domination of the Spaniards had interrupted many of the civil, as well as the religious, regulations of the Cholulans; and, with their freedom, departed that necessity and habit of vigilance, which had formerly thronged their portals with watchmen. No Indian guards, therefore, were found at the gate; and the precautions of the general had not carried his sentinels to this neglected and seemingly secure quarter. The neophyte passed

into the fields, and though hopeless, in their solitudes, of discovering the retreat of the penitent, was seduced to prolong his walk by the beauty of the night and by the many pensive thoughts to which it gave birth. How many times his reflections carried him back to the land of his nativity, to the surges that washed the Holy Land, to the trenches of Rhodes, to the shores of Granada, need not be here related; nor, if he gave many sighs to the strange sorrow and stranger destiny of his kinsman, is it fitting such emotions should be recorded. He wandered about, lost in his musings, until made sensible, by the elevation of the moon, that he had trespassed upon the hour of midnight. Roused by this discovery from his reveries, he returned upon his path, and had arrived within view of the gate, when he was arrested by the sudden appearance of four men, running towards him at a rapid gait, and presenting to his vision the figures of Indian warriors. No sooner had these fugitives approached near enough to perceive an armed cavalier intercepting the road, than they paused, uttering many quick and, to him, incomprehensible exclamations. But, though he understood not their language, he was admonished, by their actions, of the necessity of drawing his sword and defending himself from attack; for the foremost, hesitating no longer than to give instructions to his followers, instantly advanced upon him, flourishing a heavy axe of obsidian. Somewhat surprised at the audacity of this naked barbarian, but in no wise daunted at the number of his supporters, the cavalier lifted his trusty Bilboa, fully resolved to teach him such a lesson as would cause him to remember his temerity for ever; but, almost at the same moment, his wrath vanished, for he perceived, in this assailant, the young ambassador of the preceding evening; and, remembering the words of De Morla, he felt reluctant to injure one of the princes of the unhappy house of Montezuma.

"Prince!" said he, elevating his voice, but forget-

ting his want of an interpreter, "drop thy sword, and pass by in peace; for *I* have not yet declared war against thy people, and I am loath to strike thee."

But the valiant youth, misconceiving or disregarding both words and gestures, only approached with the more determination, and swung his bulky weapon over his head, as if in the act of smiting, when one of his followers, exclaiming eagerly, "Ho, Quauhtemotzin! forbear!" sprang before him, and revealed to Don Amador the countenance of the Moor Abdalla.

"Thou art safe, señor!" cried the Almogavar, "and heaven be thanked for this chance, that shows thee I have not forgotten thy benefits!"

The assurance of Abdalla was presently confirmed; for the young prince, seeing the action of the Moor, lowered his weapon, and merely surveying the cavalier with an earnest look, passed by him on his course, and was followed by the two others. Meanwhile Don Amador, regarding the Almogavar, said,—

"I know not, good Sidi,—notwithstanding this present service, for which I thank thee,—not so much because thou hast stepped between me and danger, (for, it must be apparent to thee, I could, with great ease, have defended myself from such feeble assailants,) but because thou hast freed me from the necessity of hurting this poor prince;—I say, notwithstanding all this, Abdalla, I know not whether I should not now be bound to detain thee, and compel thee to return to the general; for it is not unknown to me, that thou art, at this moment, a deserter and traitor."

"Señor!" said the Moor, withdrawing a step, as if fearing lest the cavalier would be as good as his word, "my treason is against my misfortunes, and I desert only from injustice; and if my noble lord knows thus much, he knows also, that to detain me, would be to give me to the gallows."

"I am not certain," said Don Amador, "that my

intercession would not save thy life; unless thou hast been guilty of more crimes than I have heard."

"Guilty of nothing but misfortune!" said the Moor, earnestly; "guilty of nothing but the crimes of others, and of griefs, which are reckoned against me for sins!—"

"Guilty," said the cavalier, gravely, "of treating in secret with these barbarians, who are esteemed the enemies of thy Christian friends; and guilty of seducing into the same crime thy countrymen, the Moriscos; one of whom, I am persuaded, did but now pass me with the Indians, and one of whom, also, hath charged thee with tempting him."

"Señor," said Abdalla, hurriedly, "I cannot now defend myself from these charges, for I hear my enemies in pursuit."

"And guilty," added Don Amador, with severity, "as I think, of deserting thine own flesh and blood,—thy poor and friendless boy, Abdalla!"

The Almogavar flung himself at the feet of the cavalier, saying, wildly,—

"My flesh and blood! and friendless indeed! unless thou wilt continue to protect him. Señor, for the love of heaven, for the sake of the mother who bore you, be kind and true to my boy! Swear thou wilt protect him from malice and wrong; for it was his humanity to thy kinsman, the knight, that has robbed him of his father."

"Dost thou confess, thou wert about to steal him from his protector? Now, by heavens, Moor, *this* is but an infidel's ingratitude!"

"Señor!" said Abdalla, "you reproached me for forsaking him; and now you censure me for striving not to forsake him! But the sin is mine, not Jacinto's. I commanded him to follow me, señor; and he would have obeyed me, had he not found thy knight Calavar swooning among the ruins. He tarried to give him succour, and thus was lost; for the soldiers came upon him."

"Is this so, indeed? My kinsman left swooning! Thou wert but a knave, not to tell me this before." z

"The knight is safe—he has robbed me of my child," said Abdalla, throwing himself before the neophyte. "Go not, señor, till thou hast promised to requite his humanity with the truest protection."

"Surely he shall have that, without claiming it."

"Ay, but promise me! swear it to me!" cried the Moor, eagerly. "Don Hernan will be awroth with him. The cavaliers will call him mine accomplice."

"They will do the boy no wrong," said Amador; "and I know not why thou shouldst ask me the superfluity of an oath."

"Señor, I am a father, and my child is in a danger of which thou knowest not! For the love of God, give me thy vows thou wilt not suffer my child to be wronged!"

"I promise thee this; but acquaint me with this new and unknown peril. If it be the danger of an accusation of witchcraft, I can resolve thee, that that is not regarded by the general."

"Señor, my pursuers are nigh at hand," cried Abdalla, "and I must fly! A great danger besets Jacinto, and thou canst preserve him. Swear to me, thou wilt not wrong him, and suffer me to depart."

"Wrong him!" said the cavalier. "Thou art beside thyself.—Yet, as it does appear to me, that the soldiers are approaching us, I will give thee this very unreasonable solace.—I swear to thee very devoutly, that, while heaven leaves me my sword and arm, and the power to protect, no one shall, in any way, or by any injustice, harm or wrong the boy Jacinto."

"I will remember thy promise, and thee!" cried the Almogavar, seizing his hand and kissing it.

"Tarry, Abdalla. Reflect;—thou rushest on many dangers. Return, and I will intercede for thy pardon."

But the Moor, running with great speed after his companions, was almost already out of sight; and Don Amador, musing, again turned his face towards Cholula.

"If I meet these soldiers," he soliloquized, "I must, in honour, acquaint them with the path of the Moor;

whereby Abdalla may be captured, and put to death on the spot. I am resolute, I cannot, by utterly concealing my knowledge of this event, maintain the character of a just and honest gentleman; yet, it appears to me, my duty only compels me to carry my information to the general. This will I do, and by avoiding the pursuers, preserve the obligations of humanity to the fugitive, without any forfeit of mine honour."

Thus pondering, and walking a little from the path, until the pursuers had passed him, he returned to the quarters.

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LOYD D. WINDSOR,
Teacher of Public School, No. 1.
JOSEPH BELDEN,
Teacher of Public School, No. 11.
A. DE MONTFREDY,
Teacher of Public School, No. 10.

February 8, 1838.

From the Rev. James Carnahan, President of Princeton College.

Having examined the general plan of the 1st, 2d, and 3d parts of the "NATIONAL SCHOOL MANUAL," and having also taken a cursory view of some of the details, I am satisfied that it is a work of no common merit.

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JAMES CARNAHAN.

Nassau Hall, April 27, 1832.

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I should be happy to see the Manual in every common school in the Union, from the conviction that the best interests of education would be promoted by it.

(Signed)

CHAS. SAM'L STEWART,

Chaplain U. S. Navy.

New-York, March 30, 1832.

I have examined with care and a high degree of interest the work called the "NATIONAL SCHOOL MANUAL," by Mr. M. R. Bartlett, and am so well satisfied with its merits, and that it will eventually be adopted in all our common schools, to the exclusion of every other work of the kind now in use, that I feel authorized to exert my influence to have the work introduced forthwith into my school.

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